ST. CLAIR OF THE ISLES.



A SCOTTISH TRADITION.

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ST. CLAIR OF THE ISLES;

OR, THE

OUTLAWS OF BARRA.

A SCOTTISH TRADITION.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY

ELIZABETH HELME,

AUTHOR OF THE PILGRIM OF THE CROSS, DUNCAN AND PEGGY; FARMER OF INGLEWOOD FOREST; PENITENT OF GODSTOW; MODERN TIMES; ST. MARGARET'S CAVE; LOUISA, OR THE COTTAGE ON THE MOOR; ALBERT, OR WILDS OF STRATHNAVERN, &c.

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ST. CLAIR OF THE ISLES.

CHAPTER I.

"On the ensuing morning, the chief visited Andrew in his chamber; he was then collected, but appeared to have no remembrance of what had passed; yet, grateful for the attention paid him by his master, he respectfully raised his hand to his lips. For two days no material alteration took place; on the third it was evident that the hand of death was on him; for, though no violent pains had followed the convulsions he suffered in the hall, yet that strong emo-

tion had been too much for his feeble strength to support, and he expired the fourth day after, sensible to his last hour, and mingling with the prayers he put up for his own soul, others for his noble master, and the general welfare of the house of Monteith. This venerable domestic's death was lamented by the chief like that of an old friend; and, commanding him to be laid in the chapel, he ordered a monthly mass to be said for his soul's rest.

"In the mean time, as boys naturally associate, lord John and myself became in some measure companions; he being not more than two years younger than myself. Nature and education had, however, drawn a marking line between us: he was fair, I was brown; he was delicate, I was robust; pampered and nursed from his cradle, he shrank at every blast, and dreaded a shower of rain as much as doth a cat. For myself,

inured

inured to the war of elements, they neither hurt my spirits nor my health; and cold, hunger, or thirst, if felt one hour, were with me forgotten as soon as removed. Our tempers were equally dissimilar: he had been accustomed to vassals humble as slaves, who, from his infancy, had submitted to all his caprices, which, strengthened by time, had rendered him perverse, vindictive, and tyrannical: for me, habituated to the ill-humour of my mother, the rough kindness of my father, and to attend on myself; or, if I took an unwarrantable liberty with my companions, sure of being handsomely drubbed; nay, if I had struck the old dog, of being bitten; the case was quite different: my temper, naturally passionate, was kept within the bounds of reason, and I was even careful of giving offence. I was, however, when provoked, as perverse and saucy as most; and naturally strong, even before I left

Lewes, few boys of my own age chose to enter the lists of combat with me.

"With the lord John I bore more than I had ever been accustomed to. I respected him as the nephew of my beloved patron, and sometimes thought, if he had been better tempered, I could have loved him sincerely.

"I have dwelt thus long on this subject, because a trifle that followed led to a discovery that might otherwise never have been revealed.

"We had been playing one afternoon in the hall, when, among other pastimes, I took him on my back, and, regardless of his weight, paced up and down full speed. We had amused ourselves in this manner for some time, when, watching an opportunity, he procured a large thorn, which having secretly fastened to his heel, he gave me a sharp spur on the leg. I have already said I was passionate, and that forbearance was not

among

among the catalogue of my merits; I therefore took no time for reflection; had he been heir-apparent to the crown of Scotland, I should have acted the same.—'You have treated me like a sorry beast,' said I, with anger, 'for none else need the spur; and in return I will play you a jade's trick.'—So saying, I made a plunge, and threw him on the marble pavement, regardless of the consequence. My heart, however, in a moment smote me; but the deed was done; his face was covered with blood, and his cries resounded through the hall, and not only brought several of the vassals, but also the lady Roskelyn.

"With every exaggeration a little mind can invent, he related what had happened; while I stood in silence, listening not only to him, but to the reproaches of his mother, who was not sparing of her invectives.

'Beggarly knave,' said she, 'how didst

didst thou dare to strike my son? I will have thee scourged to death.'

'Strike your son!' repeated I; 'I should be ashamed to strike such a butterfly; but though I let him ride me like a horse, I did not choose to be used like an ass.'

'He did thee too much honour to use thee in any manner,' replied she; 'my brother will now see his folly in noticing such scurvy varlets as thou art, who prove but monuments of his weakness.'

'Whoever calls the chief foolish or weak,' said I, passionately, 'is a false liar; never shall his kindness to me bring disgrace on him.'

'Not till thou comest under the hands of the executioner; which the more speedy that may happen, the better for mankind.'

'Marry, your own silken son may better deserve the hand of the executioner

tioner than me,' answered I, with blunt sauciness. 'Lord John of Roskelyn doth not dread disgrace more than St. Clair M'Crae.'

'Than whom?' eagerly repeated she, with considerable emotion.

'St. Clair M'Crae,' echoed I, undauntedly; 'I am not ashamed of my name, nor shall I eat my words, though you are a *lady*; we have none in the isle of Lewes; so I have not learned to fear them.'

"You may perhaps conjecture this insolence increased her anger, but it had a contrary effect; for the flush of passion gave way to a sickly pale, and had she not seated herself on a chair, she had fallen. She fixed her eyes on me with fearful earnestness, her lips trembled, but no word escaped them; and such was her whole appearance, that what her violence would never have effected, her looks instantly obtained; for young,

inexperience, and rudely bred as I was, they sunk into my heart, and seemed to thrill it with horror.

'Lady,' said I, approaching her, 'I grieve to have offended you.'

'Avaunt, approach me not!' screamed she, shrinking back in her chair: 'take this boy from my presence,' added she, turning to the vassals, 'and bring me a cup of water; the sight of blood hath made me sick and faint.'

"I felt my anger rekindle at her words, and left the hall, or doubtless I had been forced from it.

"The chief and lord Roskelyn were not in the castle during this confusion; but on their return were informed of it, with all the bitterness that the malice of Lady Roskelyn could invent. My patron listened to it with astonishment —'Such conduct,' he said, 'was so different to my general character, that he could

could scarcely have given it credit from any other person than his sister.'

"I was ordered into his presence, a step that all the art of the lady Roskelyn could not prevent; and, on entering the hall, found the whole party arranged to condemn me.

'St. Clair,' said the chief, with more severity than I had ever before seen him assume, 'I am at once grieved for thee and for myself; for the first, that thou couldst forget thyself so far as to use my nephew so roughly, and disregard his age and strength, which are both inferior to thine; and to add to thy guilt by thy insolence to my sister, the mother of him thou hast injured. For myself, I am vexed to have been so mistaken: I would have pledged my life on thy courage and humanity; and at fifty, I love not to be the dupe of a green head like thine.'

"He paused, as if he expected my

 answer;

answer; but I made none; and he at length continued—'Thou must prepare to return home; two of my vassals shall see thee safe restored to thy father, whom I shall not inform of this folly; for he is an honest man, and it would vex him; but I pray thee, think of it, and remember that valour is disgraced by malicious actions, and by seeking unequal contests. Farewell—I shall not forget thy attention to me during my journey, and will order thee a memorial to prove that I am not ungrateful.'

"The chief ceased. My heart swelled almost to bursting; but too proud to let a tear escape me, I at length with some difficulty replied—'I am ready to depart when you list, and need no one to conduct me. For malicious acts, or seeking unequal opponents, I am unacquainted with either. If you think me guilty, it is enough; I shall gladly depart. Recompence I will none; my heart

heart dictated my actions, and when I saw you well, repaid me.'

"'The chief turned aside, and the words, 'strange boy,' escaped him. I touched my cap to him only, and had crossed the hall in order to leave it, when he called suddenly—'Come back, St. Clair; thou owest me an explanation of thy conduct, and I demand it.'

'You should have asked it before you condemned me,' replied I; 'lord John can resolve you.'

'Dear brother,' said lady Roskelyn, who had not before spoken, 'dismiss him at once; his presence gives me pain; he seeks only to impose farther on your unsuspicious nature.'

"Influenced by the obstinacy of my temper, though I had again prepared to leave the hall, lady Roskelyn's words arrested my steps.

'Not so, sister,' answered the chief; 'I would willingly act uprightly; St. Clair's

Clair's reproof is just; I should not have condemned him unheard.' Then turning to me, he added—'Nay, I insist on thy coming back, to give the explanation I asked: but say, for I now first discover it, from what cause art thou lame, and whence are thy tartans bloody?'

'Ask your nephew,' answered I, with the same obstinate bluntness.

"The chief turned to lord John, but he was silent; and his mother again requested her brother to dismiss me.

"Monteith made no reply; but, rising from his seat, seized me in his strong grasp.

'By my soul,' said he, 'I will be satisfied! therefore answer me, from whence comes this blood?'

"Like a fawn in the gripe of a lion, I felt contest was useless; and drawing aside my tartan, I shewed my knee,

swelled

swelled and inflamed by a wound just below it.

'Oh, the arch deceiver!' exclaimed the lady Roskelyn, 'he hath done this himself, on purpose to lay the fault on my son.'

'Indeed, uncle,' said John, 'I only gave him a little spur with a thorn, but not enough to hurt his knee so much.'

'At length,' said the chief, 'truth is coming; but I am already nearly satisfied:' then, turning to a domestic who waited, he commanded him to call the leech who attended his household, when, placing me in his own seat, he ordered him to examine my leg. The leech, at the first view, declared it was dangerously inflamed, and from the appearance of the wound, had doubtless some splinter or other substance within it, which must needs be extracted before aught else could be done.

"The

"The chief's face flushed with anger, and the lord Roskelyn looked reproachfully upon his son, who began weeping, while his mother, finding no honour like to result on her darling, led him from the hall, and was speedily followed by her lord.

"I shuddered at the sight of the polished instrument which the leech held in his hand, and drew back, till the chief, assuming a reproachful air, said—'Is it possible, St. Clair, that a bold fellow like thee should tremble at the sight of a lancet? marry, I should as soon have expected thee to tremble at a lady's bodkin.

"The chief's raillery had the effect he intended; I immediately held out my leg, and without a single complaint, suffered the leech to lay open the wound, from whence he extracted a thorn of near an inch in length, and which the motion

motion of walking had caused to perforate deeply into the flesh.

"The operation over, the chief, for the first time, embraced me—'St. Clair,' said he, 'thou art a brave, but an obstinate boy; but from this hour I will never judge harshly; yet in this case my judgment, rather than my heart, was in fault.'

"The honour of having the approbation of so good and so great a character overpowered me, and, grasping his hand, I burst into tears—'I have indeed been to blame,' said I, 'but pain and passion overpowered me, and made me treat him so rudely, for which I am now sincerely sorry.'

'I trust,' replied he, 'it will prove a useful lesson; his mother will entirely corrupt him with her fondness, and lord Roskelyn possesses not strength of mind sufficient to resist her; but lean on the men, and hie thee to thy chamber; rest

is

is now all that is needful. I will see thee speedily.'

"What passed between the chief and his family I never exactly knew; but he so warmly espoused my cause, and words ran so high between them, that the lord and lady Roskelyn departed the second day after.

"A few days restored me to my usual agility, and to more than my usual favour with the chief, whom I afterwards found had resolved, from that time, to take me under his especial protection. He condescended himself to teach me the science of manly defence, and the use of arms; and six hours daily did he make me devote to the study of literature, of which I was before totally ignorant; placing me, for that purpose, under the care of the friars of the neighbouring monastery.

"Elated by the approbation my patron expressed at my improvement,

I spared

I spared no pains to merit his praise; and all went so happily for two months, that I appeared at the height of my wishes.

"One day that the chief was teaching me the broadsword in the hall, my father, M'Crae, was announced, and instantly ordered to be admitted. Though I rejoiced to see him, my satisfaction was mixed with fear, lest he should want to take me back to the island on his return. For the chief, he received him with the cordiality of a friend, rather than with the dignity of a superior. He ordered him refreshment, and bade him welcome, saying, as he conversed with him—'In faith, M'Crae, 'tis well you are come to teach us our duty; for I could almost forget St. Clair is not my son, and, in return, he hath almost learned to consider me as a father.'

"M'Crae appeared confounded at once with the kindness of the chief to himself,

himself, and his familiarity with me; he hesitated, appeared confused, and to be impressed with some secret errand he knew not how to disclose, and which visibly affected his spirits. At length, after a tedious preparation, he stammered out—'So please you, noble sir, my boy hath too long intruded on your goodness; his mother is impatient to see him.'

'To see me!' repeated I, with my accustomed bluntness; 'which way doth the wind blow now? she used to say the house was heaven when I was abroad.'

"The chief smiled, and M'Crae could not refrain from laughing—'No wonder,' said he; 'thou art a boisterous fellow, and never failed to put her house in confusion ten times a-day.'

'I fear I shall offend the same way on my return,' answered I.

'Retire for a while, St. Clair; I have business

business with thy father,' said the chief.

"I obeyed, and left the hall, when, resuming the discourse, he continued—'M'Crae, I love thy son, and wish to make him a brave fellow; but though I will purchase no man's child, yet, regarding him as I do, I cannot be unmindful of his father. Thy vessel is too small; let it be sold, and I will enable thee to buy another of double her burthen. I have also land nearly adjoining to thine at Toray; to me it is of little value; thou art welcome to use twenty acres of it; in case of my death, I will forthwith make thee a grant thereof.'

"The surprise of M'Crae left him no room for speech; he gazed at Monteith, as if he doubted the evidence of his senses—'Why, what now, man!' continued the chief; 'dost thou dispute my word, that thou lookest like one astounded?'

'Pardon me, noble sir,' at length replied

plied M'Crae; 'your goodness is so great that it took from me the power to express my gratitude. St. Clair is in truth a brave boy, and, as I have often said to my wife, would be no disgrace to a nobler father than myself; but she is of a different opinion. Honours change manners—Katie Lawrie was a girl after my own heart when she went to the Lowlands, near seventeen years ago; and when she afterwards sent for me to come and wed her, my heart was as light as a fly, though not for the sake of the money she said she had gotten, but for old love; yet, by St. Mary! though she had been absent from Caithness but five years, I had much ado to know her again, she was so bedizened with French, and befangled with English fashions—in troth, I should have taken her for any thing sooner than for a simple Highland lass.'

"The chief, who was not anxious to hear

hear the history of Katie Lawrie, would not, however, interrupt M'Crae; but finding he made a pause, said—'As long as the union of your hearts is perfect, a trifling difference of manners is of little consequence: but to St. Clair—your wife will, I doubt not, be happy to see him placed higher in life than her limited means had promised; for what I undertake I will perform.'

"M'Crae hesitated—'God knoweth,' replied he, 'I love the boy, and rejoice at his good luck; but as for Katie—'

'She will rejoice too,' said the chief; 'mothers seldom want affection for their first-born.'

'A curse on those who do!' answered M'Crae.

'Come, 'tis an agreement then—the boy shall see you yearly; though I may be his friend, he shall not forget that you are his father. Choose a good strong vessel—money shall not be wanting; we

will

will sail in her among your first passengers to Lewes.'

"M'Crae's heart, naturally honest, was overpowered by the chief's generosity. 'So may my soul prosper hereafter,' said he, 'if I speak not truly! were the choice mine, I would joyfully resign the boy to your care; but as it is, I am bound by an oath not to part with him.'

'Bound by an oath!' answered Monteith, in a voice of astonishment; 'what, to your wife, I trow? but I yield; yet remember, true affection should have prompted you to accept my offer. However, as I love not to raise expectations to cast them down by disappointment, I repeat, purchase the vessel, and take the land I before offered; but on this condition, that thou holdest it in trust for thy son St. Clair.'

"M'Crae threw himself at the chief's feet, and clasped his garment, but could not

not speak. At that moment one of the fathers of the monastery entered the hall; his name was Thomas; and, added to a strong and cultivated understanding, he possessed a penetrating and sound judgment, accompanied with a thorough knowledge of the human heart. Seeing the posture of the chief and M'Crae, he drew back, and would have quitted the hall; but Monteith recalled him, and in few words related what had passed, premising the relation by saying—'I wished, father, to have purchased this honest man's son; but he declines my offer. If the wish was sinful, I have endeavoured to make an expiation, and thou art come in time to be umpire between us.'

"Father Thomas listened with attention to the recital which the chief gave with accuracy; and, on the conclusion, said—'That the happiness and welfare of the lad were your only inducement is plain;

plain; and I cannot but wonder what motives can be strong enough to induce M'Crae to refuse offers so advantageous to his child. Cry his mercy, I recall to my memory, you said that an oath bound him; in which case, I rejoice that he hath sufficient courage to resist worldly prosperity for heavenly treasure. But what man hath a right to exact an oath from a father to keep his son in an inferior line of life, when fortune, honour, and probity, conjoin to place him higher? yet an oath is sacred, and if not extorted for *bad* purposes, should be held even at the expence of life; for it is registered in heaven, and witnessed by the saints.

'It was registered in hell, and witnessed by devils!' said M'Crae; like Eve, Katie tempted me to sin; and now, to complete the measure of my iniquity, the curse of ingratitude is upon me.'

'If

If thou hast done evil, repentance is yet in thy power, my son,' said father Thomas; 'look well to thine own heart; should thy oath be good, I charge thee, by our Holy Mother, and for the future welfare of thine eternal soul, to let no lucre or persuasion wrest it from thee; but if it be a sinful oath, discharge thy conscience, lest it plunge thee into everlasting perdition.'

"M'Crae's firm features unbent, and his ruddy complexion became a faded yellow.—'Holy friar,' said he, hastily, 'I am not the father of the boy!'

'Away with such subterfuges!' said the chief; 'I will no more! I forgive thy refusal, but falsehood I cannot brook.'

'How know you he speaks falsely?' said the friar; his heart is open to God, and he alone can judge it.'

'Pardon me,' answered Monteith; 'I will away; so that if ye desire, ye

may discourse more at leisure. M'Crae, fare ye well.'

'Noble master, I conjure you, stay. Should I forfeit my oath, say, father, can the sin be forgiven?

'If it be a just oath, and taken for honest purposes, I again conjure thee to hold it sacred; but if one prompted for dishonest and vile designs, tear it from thy soul, and throw thyself on the mercy of thy Creator; at the foot of the altar, myself and my brethren will pray for thee, and our supplications and thy repentance shall ascend together.'

'God grant it!' replied M'Crae; 'but, father, I shall, by the relation, be treated as an imposter; and the noble chief himself will accuse me of falsehood, and condemn me to punishment; for I shall throw shame on some of the noblest blood of Scotland, and perhaps be sentenced to the horrors of a dungeon.'

"The

"The chief again attempted to leave the hall, but M'Crae entreated his stay, while the friar answered—'The chief, or I mistake his character, is too just to condemn on light conjecture; and for the shame thou alludest to, let it fall where 'tis due; sin fouls the noblest blood as much as it doth the basest; and should even the arm of power assail thee, so thou savest thine own soul, all else is trivial; for even in the dungeon's gloom the spirit of peace and comfort shall hover over thee.'

"A secret dread still appeared to impress the mind of M'Crae.—'Promise me, noble master, your pardon,' said he, addressing the chief, 'and also your patience; for I have a long story to relate.'

'It can be of no avail to promise thee pardon for what I can have no interest in; but, however, if it is conducive to thy satisfaction, I promise.'

 'I thank

'I thank you, noble sir; I feel you will condemn me for a liar; but, by my soul, I will speak nought but the truth.'

"Monteith, who, at the beginning of the discourse, expected only some trivial relation of no concern, had insensibly become interested, and bade him begin without fear.

"M'Crae prepared to obey, but the friar prevented him, by first drawing the cross from his side, and saying—'Behold this sacred symbol of our everlasting hope; it is made of wood taken from the blessed sepulchre of Jerusalem; lay it to thy lips, and swear to advance nothing but truth in what thou art about to relate.'

"M'Crae pressed the cross to his lips, took the vow, and entered on his relation.—But 'tis too late to begin it now," said St. Clair; "I will therefore defer it until to-morrow.

The

The whole party appeared disappointed, but particularly Randolph, who eagerly listened to the relation; and though many of the party knew the story partially, not one had before heard it regularly or accurately detailed; they therefore waited the afternoon of the ensuing day with impatience, when St. Clair resumed his narrative.

CHAPTER II.



"My friends," said St. Clair, "I must now, for a time, continue my relation, if not in the exact words of M'Crae, at least to their purport:

'I was born,' said he, 'in the shire of Caithness; my father and Katie Lawrie's were neighbours; I loved her from her childhood, and I believe she did the same by me; but our dispositions were different, I offered to wed her, and labour to support her, as our fathers had done before for their wives and families! but Katie would not listen to it; she, forsooth, was for waiting until we got together some money, as she said, to begin the world with; and one of her sisters

sisters being engaged to attend a lady in the south, no persuasions could prevent Katie from accompanying her. We however swore to be true to each other, and breaking a piece of silver between us, separated.

'After Katie's departure, I engaged in a trading vessel, and soon became a good seaman; and succeeded so far as to collect a small sum towards our future establishment, which I did not fail to inform her of by letter, which I sent by a merchant traveller On his return he brought me back a reply; she congratulated me on my success, conjured me to be diligent if I wished to gain her hand; and finally informed me, that she had been fortunate enough to be engaged into the service of the widow of the chief Monteith, who, with her daughter, was then at Edinburgh.'

'Mean you my mother-in-law and

sister?' said the chief, interrupting M'Crae's relation.

'I do,' answered he; 'you, noble master, was then in the Holy Land; your father had been dead some years; and the dame and the lady Mariam were for the first time in the city.

'From this period I often heard news of Katie by various messengers; and also that the lady Monteith was dead; and that her daughter still remained at Edinburgh.

'Thus passed four years, when, to my great surprise, I received a letter from Katie by an especial messenger; it was to press me to come immediately to the city to espouse her, as she had hopes of procuring the means of fixing us comfortably for life.

'Though much astonished at this letter, I instantly obeyed the request it conveyed, and that too with a joyful heart,

heart, for I loved the maiden; and returning back with the messenger, he conducted me to a lone house in the suburbs of the city, where I had not remained long before Katie joined me; but, by St. Mary, so fine a lady that I scarcely knew her. We were however glad to see each other; and among more news, she informed me that her young lady was to be married to the lord of Roskelyn, on his return from France, where some months before he had attended an embassy.

'Not to weary you, we were wedded; and soon after Katie began to be communicative; she however first swore me to secrecy, and then informed me, that if I strictly observed her injunctions, our fortune would be made. Alas! I fear to continue, for you will doubt my truth; yet it is of no advantage to me to lie.'

"The chief bade him continue with-

out dread; and after some hesitation he resumed his narrative.

'Katie at length informed me that the lady Mariam was pregnant——'

'Hell and destruction!' interrupted the chief, 'this is too much; thou false villain, I will tear the lie from thy perjured heart! not a maid in all Scotland was more highly prized for beauty than my sister, and her chastity more than equalled her bodily endowments.'

"M'Crae trembled; but friar Thomas re-assured him.—'I pray you, peace and patience,' said he, addressing the chief; 'let the man relate his story; should it prove false, rage can come hereafter; recollect, he is before the Searcher of all hearts; should he speak truth, and his veracity be hereafter acknowledged, how will you blush for having been thus hasty?'

"The chief made no reply; and the friar requested M'Crae to continue.

'Katie

'Katie said the lady Mariam had long been courted by the lord Roskelyn; that their marriage had only been delayed by her mother's death; and in the intervening time, he had been ordered to France on a secret commission, which could not be refused without dishonour; that after his departure the lady Mariam had found herself with child, and, distracted with grief and shame, had vowed to destroy herself rather than outlive the disgrace.—'And now, M'Crae,' added Katie, 'you shall hear what is expected from us. In little more than a month, the pains of childbirth will fall on my mistress; before which time she will hasten here, where all can be transacted with secrecy; and she can, as speedily as possible, be conveyed back to her own dwelling.'

'Though I believe not a syllable of this tale,' again interrupted the chief,

'say, canst thou tell me where was situated the dwelling of my sister Mariam at that time?'

'It was,' replied M'Crae, 'on the left side the Holyrood-House; an avenue of trees led to the dwelling, which was small, and had been purposely hired for the lady Mariam's mother, who came to the city on purpose to consult the physicians.'

'So far,' answered the chief, 'thou art rightly informed, as I have heard it described; go on.'

'Katie,' resumed M'Crae, 'then related to me all the arrangements they had made, and concluded by saying—'The disgrace, if any, M'Crae, must be mine; for we must acknowledge the child. Thou art totally unknown in the city, and whether thou camest yesterday or a twelvemonth back, no one will take the pains to inquire.'

'I now perfectly understood why I had

had been so hastily sent for, and found interest rather than love had been Katie's motive; I however consented to all she proposed.

'In the course of a few days she entirely relinquished her attendance at the lady Mariam's, where she had before gone daily; and I was sent thither to say she was confined by illness; this message she ordered me to deliver to the domestics, for them to repeat to their mistress. I did as I was desired, and, in return, was ordered to attend the lady. On my admittance, I repeated what I was told; to which she answered with great kindness, that she would see my wife herself in the course of the day; gave me at the same time a demy, and desired that she might want for no care. I at this visit particularly noticed the person of the lady Mariam; her features were noble and commanding, and her port so tall and dignified, that the enlargement

enlargement of her shape might have escaped a keener observer than myself, particularly as she wore a long loose robe, which fell from her shoulders to her feet.

'True to her word, she came to see Katie daily, frequently dismissing her attendants and staying for hours. At length the expected time arrived; she came one morning more early than usual, and, as I should conjecture, in great bodily pain; of which, however, she shewed no sign while dismissing her attendants, whom she ordered to return at noon.

'She retired immediately to bed; the chamber was darkened, and I was sent to a distant part of the town for a midwife, to whom Katie told me to say my wife was in labour. I did so, and she accompanied me home. In about three hours I heard a boy was born, when, according to the instructions I had received,

ceived, I gave the good wife a piece of money, and dismissed her.

'On the return of the lady Mariam's domestics, Katie, with feigned sorrow, informed them that her dear mistress had been suddenly taken ill, and had laid down on her poor bed, where she wished to remain quiet for a few hours; then desired they would return again in the evening; and for the present dismissed them.'

'In the mean time, the child was carefully removed out of sight, into a loft above the chamber, and where, though I handled him roughly, I was chief nurse. By my faith, he was a brave boy, and as I held him, his little hands clasping my fingers, and his black eyes fixed on my face, I could not help saying, there was a thousand times more sin in denying such a lad than in begetting him.'

"The chief, who evidently listened with

with forced composure to M'Crae's relation, here again interrupted him.—'For what purpose thou hast fabricated this tale I know not; but of that hereafter. What, I pray thee, became of this wonderful child, this begotten of thine own brain?'

'So may my soul remain for ever in peace or misery, if you see him not in St. Clair!' replied M'Crae.

"The priest crossed himself; the chief started; but instantly recovering himself, he replied, with a smile of contempt and incredulity—'By my soul, M'Crae, thou art an ingenious fellow! I could not have thought that thou possessed such inventive faculties; but in this case they are misemployed. I confess I was inclined to love and favour thy son; but thy anxiety to make him mine, by transplanting him into my family by the dishonour of my sister, hath destroyed the illusion; thou needest therefore

therefore proceed no further—I have heard enough.'

'Not so,' replied father Thomas, 'I pray you hear all.'

'As you please. Proceed M'Crae; thou liest with the effrontery of a courtier, and that too without blushing.'

"M'Crae hesitated; but the injunctions of the friar at length encouraged him to procced.

'In the evening, the domestics were again told, that the lady Mariam was still sick, but ordered to procure a covered litter to carry her home; which was accordingly done at a late hour. Katie attending her, and leaving the babe to me, saying all that would be necessary till her return would be to give it milk, which she left for that purpose. During her absence, I fed the child; after which he slept very quietly in my arms; and may I never see Heaven,

ven, if I did not from that night love him!

'At an early hour she returned, and paid more minute attention to him than I was capable of; but before noon she again visited her lady, who acted her part so well that her real situation was never suspected. Noble master,' continued M'Crae, 'I see you listen with impatience; but I shall soon conclude. About fourteen days after, during which period Katie had attended her mistress some hours every day, she returned one evening in high spirits—' 'Tis true, M'Crae,' said she, 'we have gotten a boy rather early after our marriage, but we have also gotten wherewithal to support him; and all that is now required of us, is immediately to repair to a good distance, where we may lay out our acquirements to the best advantage.' So speaking, she drew forth a well-furnished

purse,

purse, and giving it into my hands, said—
' I have not only this for the present, but also a promise of more in future; we must, however away; for my mistress' fears distract her, lest this business should be by any means discovered.'

' Why surely," replied I, ' she doth not mean to give up the child for ever?'

' Marry, but she doth, replied Katie; ' and what is that to thee, as long as thou art well paid? and of that there is no doubt, for her own sake.'

' Nay, but Katie,' said I, ' on the lord of Roskelyn's return, he will most probably wed her.'

' Doubtless he will; but you know little of the lady Mariam; not more famed for beauty than for chastity, she would sooner die than yield up the reputation of either; therefore this boy will never be acknowledged.'

" Now the devil take me quick!' returned I, ' if I was the lord of Roskelyn,

kelyn, if I would wed such a woman, if, added to her beauty, she were princess of Scotland. What, give up her child! a curse on such mothers'

'More discourse passed; but the result was, that three days after, we left the city, the child being first baptized as my son, and the lady Mariam never once seeing him before our departure.

'We travelled by easy journeys into Inverness-shire, where, after some stay, I purchased a small vessel that lay on the coast, as a sea-faring life was most agreeable to my wishes. In this vessel I went to Lewes, where I afterwards fixed, with the approbation of my wife, who liked the situation, as she was more respectfully treated there than she would have been in the Highlands. By various means, we frequently heard of the lady Mariam (soon after, lady Roskelyn), who never failed to send us a good present every year or two; and this conti-

nued

nued till you, noble master, came to Lewes.'

'And now, I conclude thou hast done,' said the chief; ''tis a well-connected story, to be sure, and I give thee all due credit for thy invention.'

'I have not yet done,' replied M'Crae; 'what I have more to relate may make you, in some measure, retract your opinion of my falsehood.

'My wife was vexed that you, sir, were our guest; she feared a discovery; but I thought that impossible; yet when I saw the fancy you took to the boy, I could not help judging the hand of Providence was in it. We trembled to let him go with you, but did not dare refuse; and here he met the lady Roskelyn.'

'He did so,' replied the chief; 'and were it only from her conduct towards him here, I am convinced that there is

no affinity of blood between them; for she viewed him with particular dislike.'

'Alas!" answered the friar, 'that is no proof; few people love those they have grossly injured.'

'The messenger that you were pleased to send,' returned M'Crae, 'filled both my wife and self with the most distracting anxiety, as we feared that, at the castle of Monteith, St. Clair might meet his mother, to whom, though his person would be unknown, the name of St. Clair M'Crae would not fail to discover him. In this dilemma were we uncertain how to act, when, about a month since, we received a letter from lady Roskelyn, by a vessel that touched at Lewes, and which had sailed from Glasgow for Bergen in Norway.'

'Have ye that letter?' hastily returned the chief.

'I have,' replied M'Crae; 'it may give me a credit you deny my words;'

so

so saying, he drew it from his pocket, and presented it to Monteith.

"The chief's face flushed with a deep crimson on viewing the hand-writing, which, on perusing, he found as follows:

"KATIE M'CRAE,

"I judged that my kindness and liberality to you for so many years had secured your friendship and observance; if so, whence comes it that I find the boy St. Clair at the castle of Monteith? If you value my future favour, send your husband immediately to fetch him home; no man has a right to detain the son of another. If you have the will, you cannot fail of the means to obey me; which if you do not, we are henceforward strangers.

"M. R.

"If I find you observant, you shall hear from me speedily."

"The

"The chief laid down the letter, and calmly desired M'Crae to proceed, if he had aught else to relate.

"M'Crae replied, that on the receipt of the letter, he had a severe dispute with his wife, who accused him of being the sole cause of lady Roskelyn's anger, and insisted on his immediately fetching St. Clair home.—'And now, noble master,' added he, 'though you have accused me of falsehood, and seeking to impose St. Clair on you, I declare, before God, that I am innocent of both: your kind and noble offers stung me to the heart, for I was conscious how little I deserved them: yet, but for the admonitions of this holy friar, I should have still concealed the secret in my own bosom. I seek not, nor wish reward; my wife will daily upbraid me; lady Roskelyn will perhaps pursue me to destruction; but I have done my duty, and that must be my consolation.'

M'Crae

'M'Crae,' replied the chief, 'I am lost in perplexity, but will, if possible, search this business to the bottom; if thou hast dealt falsely by me, look to the consequence; if thou hast not, thy fortune I take upon myself. For the present, if thou valuest my friendship, keep all secret from St. Clair, and remain for some days at the castle.'

"M'Crae promised obedience; and soon after the chief dismissed him to repose after his journey."

CHAPTER III.



"After M'Crae's departure, the strange story he had related furnished a long conversation for the chief and father Thomas; the latter appeared inclined to give entire credit to the relation; the former, on the contrary, had it not been for the letter, would have disbelieved the whole; but that circumstance was too strong to be overlooked; for without some powerful motive, why should so insignificant an object as the boy St. Clair interest the proud and highly placed lady Roskelyn?

'By my soul and honour, I will be satisfied!' said the chief; 'should M'Crae speak true, the levity of my sister is the least

least of her guilt; to cast off her child, and doom him to a life of meanness with the lowest hinds; to bar him from his birthright to conceal her own shame—out upon her! I grieve to think she partakes of my father's blood.'

'His birth proved,' replied the friar, 'as no just cause prevented the marriage of the parties, he is the lawful heir of the house of Roskelyn*.'

* Children born out of wedlock, (called natural children, or bastards,) by the law of Scotland, may be made legitimate or lawful, by the subsequent intermarriage of the mother of the child with the father; and this sort of legitimation entitles the child to all the rights of lawful children; the subsequent marriage, thus producing legitimation, being considered, by a fiction of the law, to have been entered into when the child was begotten; and hence, if he be a male, he excludes, by his right of primogeniture, the sons procreated after the marriage, from the succession of the father's heritage, though the sons were lawful children from the birth. Hence also those children only can be thus legitimated, who are begotten of a woman whom the father might at that period have lawfully married.—*Erskine's Institutes of the Law of Scotland.*

 'True;

'True; but I cannot as yet fix an implicit belief on the tale; however, while I detain M'Crae here, do thou hasten to the island, acquaint his wife of the discovery, but let her not know by whom it was made; from her behaviour we shall be the better enabled to judge.'

" In the interval of the father's absence, according to the orders of the chief, M'Crae remained at the castle, and behaved to me as usual. I remarked, however, a change in the conduct of the chief, not that he was less kind to me than before, but he was more thoughtful, and appeared at times to consider my person with the most fixed attention. One day, being with him in the gallery where the portraits of his ancestors were hung, he particularly placed me by that of his father, and after

a few

a few moments consideration, exclaimed, striking his forehead—'By Heaven, 'tis almost proof!'

'On the return of father Thomas, he had a long conference with the chief, whom he informed that he had accused Katie M'Crae with secreting the heir of a noble family, and threatened her with the weight of the law, and the anathema of the church, unless, by a full disclosure of all she knew, she saved herself from the penalty. Katie however endured the contest, and continued firm to the interest of the lady Roskelyn, without suffering a word to escape her that could corroborate the testimony of M'Crae; but on the father, as the conclusive stroke, insisting on her swearing by the blessed cross, which he tendered to her, she hesitated, and would have declined the oath. The father's suspicions confirmed by the refusal, he insisted more peremptorily on her compliance,

pliance, on pain of being forced to accompany him to the castle of Monteith, and there, before the chief, and the lord and lady Roskelyn, be obliged, by the authority of the church, to take the oath required. Katie, thus pressed, had no subterfuge remaining, but threw herself at the feet of the friar, not only confirming all that M'Crae had before advanced, by her verbal testimony, but also by the oath required. In farther corroboration, she likewise produced several letters from the countess, in all of which the boy St. Clair was mentioned, though none of them particularly entered into the subject.

"This relation nearly obliterated all doubt from the mind of the chief; yet, still unwilling to consider his sister in so odious a point of view, he ordered me to prepare to attend him to Roskelyn.

"Though I was ignorant of the reason, I obeyed with pleasure; and, with some

some few domestics, we travelled to the castle.

"The family were absent on an excursion of pleasure, and we waited three days for their return, when the lord Roskelyn first arrived. He was a weak but an honest man, and, left to the dictates of his own heart, would, I have no doubt, have acted uprightly; but, the infatuated slave of his wife, her superior art moulded him at will.

"The dissension that had taken place two months before at the castle of Monteith made a visit unexpected; and the chief was received with uncommon satisfaction.

"Dining alone in the hall with the earl, and the repast ended, as they pledged each other in repeated goblets, the chief began a discourse concerning the embassy in which the lord of Roskelyn had been engaged to France prior to his marriage; from which reverting to

 the

the lady Roskelyn, he said—'My sister, at that period, was very young; the death of my mother-in-law, and my absence, left her under too little restraint; human nature is frail: however, Roskelyn, thou wert an honourable fellow, and acted as every honest man should on such an occasion.'

"The earl blushed deeply.—'To be the brother of the brave Monteith was my utmost ambition,' answered he; 'and, believe me, the vexation I suffered from my protracted stay, filled me with the utmost anxiety.'

"It was indeed vexatious,' replied the chief, regarding the earl's words as in some degree a confirmation of his suspicions; 'more especially as it subjected your first-born to injustice.'

"Roskelyn started, and appeared covered with confusion; he had however too much honour, or too little art, to deny what, by the chief's words, he

appeared

appeared so well acquainted with, and, after a momentary hesitation, replied—'Dear brother, this is an unpleasant subject to be renewed after so many years, and for which I have made every atonement in my power.'

"Yes, to my sister; but to your unoffending boy something is surely due.'

'Monteith, replied the earl, 'where you procured this information, I know not, but be assured it is mixed with falsehood. The unhappy child died as soon as born; in which case, common prudence dictated concealment.'

"Roskelyn's manner convinced the chief he had been abused, and he was on the point of undeceiving him, when a noise of horses was heard in the court; and the moment after, lady Roskelyn entered. Surprised, though rejoiced to see her brother, particularly as she supposed me returned with M'Crae, she

gave him a hearty welcome; but her satisfaction was of short duration; for, addressing her, he continued the subject, saying—'A business of the utmost consequence brought me hither; no less, sister, than the right of your son, St. Clair. Human nature is fallible, and shame, to a noble mind, is worse than death; yet, Mariam, even these considerations must not render us unjust, or regardless of the most sacred duties. Nay, shrink not; I feel too much for you, to add reproach to your own feelings. Do justice, even now, and behold, among the first of your vindicators, Monteith; and, by my soul, the man that dares but to wag his finger in scorn shall either take or lose a life!"

"The internal struggles of the lady Roskelyn, thus taken by surprise, were too great to suffer her to articulate; she sunk on the bosom of her lord, and concealed her face.

'Brother,'

'Brother,' said Roskelyn, 'have mercy; you are indeed misinformed.'

'I am not misinformed,' replied the chief; 'the strong and haughty mind of Mariam would not sink thus under falsehood! Come, come, my sister—step over false shame, and be truly a mother; the laws of your country are on your side, those of God and justice on that of your child;—let the world say that, in an unguarded moment, you forgot what was due to yourself; but never suffer them to say you possessed so little nature as to abandon your infant.'

"Lady Roskelyn did not raise her head, but, in a low voice, said to her husband—'Lead me forth, I pray you; I will talk with my brother to-morrow.'

"The chief was ever of opinion, that had the discovery been then pursued, she would have made an ample confession; but the tenderness of her husband, and the lenity of her brother, spared her;

 and

and she was conducted to her chamber. Would you believe that this artful and unprincipled woman, when recovered from her first surprise, absolutely denied any knowledge of the business, farther than she declared that the chief's partiality for the boy St. Clair had induced his parents to fabricate, what she stiled, so infamous a lie, in order to ingratiate him still more; that, in regard to the letters that had passed between her and Katie M'Crae, they only tended to denote a mistaken predilection towards an undeserving and ungrateful object; and that her last, which ordered my return home, was alone dictated by prudential motives, which induced her not to calmly endure the prospect of the estate belonging to her house being lavished on a stranger?

"The pliant Roskelyn yielded credit to his wife's protestations. He was well aware of her being pregnant while he

was

was in France; but that the infant had *died* in its birth, he implicitly trusted to her asseverations:—not so the chief; he saw through the duplicity, and much family contention ensued, but which was productive of nothing but an everlasting disunion between the parties.

"In the first effervescence occasioned by this rupture, the chief purposed to brave the shame of the world, and declare his sisters disgrace and inhumanity; but a short reflection altered his determination, and made him resolve on silence.

"A family rēnowned for centuries for the honour of its males, and the chastity of its females, to be thus at once contaminated with levity and unprecedented barbarity, was too much to think of with patience, and at length made him devise a new expedient.

"He immediately left the castle, and, hiring apartments in the city, assumed

a conduct

a conduct that, however flattering to me, he did not then explain. I ate at the same table, accompanied him wherever he went; and, to complete my satisfaction, the name of St. Clair M'Crae was changed to that of St Clair Monteith.

"King James the First was at that period a captive in England, and the government of Scotland in the hands of Robert duke of Albany. One public day of audience, I accompanied the chief to the court, and was not a little surprised when ordered to attend him into the presence-chamber. The venerable duke of Albany was seated on a chair of state, but, at sight of the chief, immediately called him forward—'Monteith,' said he, 'thou art welcome; I never expected to see thee more; say, how can we bribe thee to visit us sometimes? a man like me, at the close of life, wishes to see his friends about him.'

'Gracious sir,' replied Monteith, 'your

words,

words, while they reproach my neglect, are still most flattering to me; and believe me, that however negligent in form, my duty to the duke of Albany hath never slept; and should he need an arm or a life, no man in Scotland shall be more ready in his cause than Monteith.'

'I believe thee,' replied the duke, 'and from no man in Scotland would I sooner claim the promise; so far then we are equal: but what lad hast thou there?' for, unacquainted with forms, I had advanced with him. 'In faith,' continued he, 'he is thine own; for he hath the port, the complexion, and the eyes of a Monteith.'

'My noble lord, you have judged too hastily. A true soldier of the cross, I never was a father; this boy, the innocent victim of a cruel mother and of a weak father, I wish to appropriate to myself;

myself; and, as I think he possesses the seeds of probity and valour, at present to give him my own name, and at my death, my fortune, provided your consent can be obtained to confirm and sanction the deed.'

"The duke appeared astonished; but, in truth he was not more so than myself; and, regardless of the presence in which I stood, I exclaimed—'Oh, my noble master, sooner would I give up the satisfaction of ever seeing you more, rather than see you dead, though the wealth of nations should be my portion!'

"The chief smiled at my earnestness, and bade me peace. The duke replied—'Is this a hasty resolution, Monteith? If it be, give it a second consideration; you cannot adopt this youth without injuring your nearest ties of blood. You must, however, pass this evening with

me,

me, when we will converse more at large on this business.'

"We remained during the audience, and at the close of day, leaving me at home, the chief again attended the duke, when he was honoured with a long and private conference; during which he laid the whole business before him, entreating him to spare the honour of his house the shame of a public disclosure, and to make me amends for the injustice of my parents, by passing an act to enable him to adopt me.

"The duke listened to him with attention, and would have persuaded him to have the business laid before the judges of his country; but the chief declined it. 'By giving the lad,' said he, 'my whole property, he will have little to regret for the loss of that of Roskelyn; the step will also fall heavy on his unnatural mother: I shall cover the

the shame of my house, and save the ashes of my father from the reproach of having, in his dotage, given being to such a serpent.'

"The reasons of the chief were at length admitted; and, a short time after, I was by law appointed to bear the name and arms of Monteith, and also declared heir to that house.

"These events were so astonishing to me, that they almost appeared like a dream; the chief became daily more attached to me, and I loved and reverenced him beyond all earthly beings.

"On our return to the castle, he one day said to me—'My good boy, though I regard you henceforward as my son, you must not forget your duty to M'Crae; he is not your father, but you owe him obligations which can only be repaid by the attention of a child. From a careful observance of your character,

I have

I have adopted you; betray not my judgment, but act worthy the name I have given.'

'M'Crae not my father!' replied I with astonishment; 'then who, I pray you, is?'

'That hereafter thou shalt know; for the present, thou must acknowledge me as such, though I have no right to the title.'

'I would you had—I never shall love one so well.'

'That your observance will shew. Your childhood hath been neglected; let your more advanced years be so well employed in study, that the mis-spent time may be redeemed.'

"On our arrival at home, the chief kept his word most punctually with M'Crae, whom he dismissed with money to purchase a larger vessel, and also made him a grant of the land before mentioned."

"Though I loved M'Crae, and felt sorrow

sorrow to see him depart, yet I must candidly acknowledge, I was not displeased to hear I was not his son; and, though I endeavoured to gain the secret from him, he was too faithful to the chief to satisfy my curiosity.

"I was now immediately under the eye of Monteith, and studied with the utmost assiduity, so fearful was I of displeasing him. In these studies I became acquainted with Ross, Hamilton, Randolph, and James M'Gregor, whose society hath proved a source of comfort in my misfortunes; notwithstanding which, I shall ever regret having involved them in my calamities.

"From the family of Roskelyn we were totally estranged; but the chief frequently heard of the contemptuous expressions they used in speaking of his partiality for me—a partiality that furnished a universal subject of wonder for a considerable time.

"I visited

"I visited M'Crae yearly; at which period I never failed to sail among the islands, and, by the bounty of the chief, which enabled me to be generous, cultivated that friendship and attachment among the inhabitants, that hath since proved so serviceable to me.

"Thus passed the time until I was nineteen, when I accompanied the chief to the siege of Berwick, and in the subsequent contests that followed with the English.

"No very material circumstance took place during this campaign, but the burning of the town of Penrith by the Scots, and that of Dumfries by the English; at the latter of which I formed an acquaintance which I must more particularly relate.

"A detachment of our army at that time lay in ambush at a short distance from Dumfries, watching the motions of the enemy, when the sight of the flames reached

reached us. The chief commanded me to advance at the head of three hundred men to assist the sufferers. At our approach the marauders hastily retreated, and I was fortunate enough to render some services, that afterwards were overpaid with the most flattering thanks.

"At the extremity of the town, where the flames raged with the utmost fury, at a casement I discovered a young girl wringing her hands, and imploring assistance, though, in the general confusion, her words were lost in air. I took no time for reflection, but, with the warmth of youth, entered into the house; the smoke nearly stifled me, and the flames, which I rushed through, burned my hands and face so severely, that I yet bear the scars. Intent, however, on executing my purpose, they did not deter me from pursuing my way, and I reached some stone stairs, which led to the chamber where I had perceived the

young

young girl at the window. She was still there, but by this time nearly senseless from the smoke and affright, and having hastily risen, was almost unclothed. I tore a large plaid from my shoulders, and enveloped her in it; then, taking her in my arms, hastily descended, and was lucky enough to effect her escape, at the expence of the few hurts I have before mentioned. As I rushed from the house, I was so nearly suffocated, that I fell senseless on the ground; she was in the same state; but the fresh air speedily recovered us, when I was overwhelmed with the thanks of not only the maid I had rescued, but also with those of her father, sir David Stuart.

"Ellen was at that time not more than sixteen, and, in my eyes, the fairest creature they ever had beheld, or indeed they ever did behold, until I

saw

saw thee, my Ambrosine; then my love—"

"In truth," interrupted Ambrosine, laughing, "thou didst well to throw in that palliative; for thou art aware that women never forgive a slight upon their beauty: but proceed; I yield to Ellen the prize of loveliness, as I bore off the prize most estimable to my heart."

Monteith kissed his wife's hand, and continued:—

"I have said, Ellen was young and beautiful; my heart was warm and undefended; therefore, though a short space cured the outward burns of my skin, the internal burns I had received were not so easily healed.

"The chief applauded me highly, and I began to be held in some estimation by many who heretofore had paid me no attention.

"On our return to the castle of Monteith,

teith, we found father Thomas absent. He had heard that Katie M'Crae languished in a decline; and, willing to witness if the prospect of death made any alteration in what she had before declared, he hastened to her.

"Her dying breath confirmed her former asseverations, and he returned with the testimony signed the evening before her dissolution.

"The affection I felt for Ellen made me ardently wish to know to whom I owed my birth; yet no word had ever yet transpired; but the honour of the name of Monteith, and the courage which the world chose to give me credit for, preserved me from reproach.

"Sir David Stuart dwelt in Inverness-shire, at the castle of the valley; thrice had I been there with the chief, who saw and approved my passion for Ellen, though he insisted I should shew myself worthy the name I bore, before

I presumed to think of marriage. This command, however unwillingly, I obeyed, and my passion was confined to my heart, or, at least, only expressed by my actions.

"At this period, many Scots were serving in France, under the command of the duke of Touraine; thither did the chief send me, to gain, as he said, experience, and exercise myself in arms. Sir James Ross, with James and Randolph M'Gregor, were my companions; and there we became acquainted with De Bourg.

"The campaign being ended, the chevalier, whose friendship we had been happy enough to gain, sold his patrimony, and accompanied us back to Scotland: the chief was delighted with his character, and he remained our much honoured and welcome guest for some time.

"I was on my return in my twenty-first

first year, my heart unacquainted with sorrow, and my temper unbroken by misfortune; the chief had been to me more than parent; but his death appeared the fatal prelude of the calamities I was doomed to suffer. I have, however, much to condemn in myself; for, had not my own imprudence conspired to assist my enemies, they had never so completely triumphed over me.

"Scarcely had I been three months at home, when my noble, my dearest friend declined; it was, however, a decline worthy the life it followed; it was the evening of a well-spent day, whose setting sun bespoke a glorious rising; my only father died in my arms. He left me unconditional heir of his vast possessions, all of which I would have gladly yielded to have prolonged his life. Pardon me; the remembrance yet unmans me; for, as my obligations to him

were beyond all computation, so was my affection in its return."

Monteith was silent, and the discourse ceased till the ensuing evening, when he resumed his story.

CHAP-

CHAPTER IV.



"PREVIOUS to my ever-honoured friend's death, in the presence of father Thomas, he informed me of all I have now related to you; adding, as he concluded—'The honour of my family hath made me weak enough to conceal this base and dishonest act; for which, St. Clair, I have made thee all the amends in my power. Had I had recourse to law, the event would have been uncertain; for such testimonies as those of M'Crae and his wife would have possibly availed but little, against the asseverations of the earl and countess of Roskelyn. If, therefore, I might advise thee, be satisfied with what thou hast,

hast, if they let thee enjoy it in quiet; but if not, thou art free to make what use thou pleasest of the intelligence I have revealed. Nature may, perhaps, at some future period, resume her rights in the bosom of thy mother; but, should it not, remember, that the same Power who guided me to find thee on the coast of Toray can direct thee to a yet better parent.'

"Such were the words of the chief, who died two days after the disclosure. Ardently as I wished to know my family, how did I shudder on the review! and for the present, with a kind of conscious shame, resolved, as Monteith had advised, to bury the secret in my own heart.

"To my brother John,* gladly would I have yielded the fortune of my birthright; but to be foiled and unacknowledged for no crime of my own, required some share of philosophy to bear.

"The

"The will of the noble chief was so perfect in all its forms, that vain was the cavil of the law to dispute its validity; and my unnatural mother, whatever she felt, was *then* obliged to acquiesce in silence.

"Six months after Monteith's death, my father, or rather the earl of Roskelyn, fell into a lingering sickness, during which I thought it my duty to write to him, but have no doubt that the letter never reached his hand; but had it, such was the power of his wife, that she would, as heretofore, have out-sworn the truth, and he as readily have given an implicit belief to her vows.

"In a storm that happened the winter after my uncle's death, the honest M'Crae perished; and with him I lost the last living witness of my real birth.

"The earl of Roskelyn's malady proved fatal, and John succeeded him. For myself, I had no cause to lament

 him,

him, nor did I attempt a semblance of grief which I could not feel.

"The time now authorised me to visit Ellen, and I resolved to offer her my hand and heart; for which purpose I hastened to her father's castle. All there was grief and desolation; and it was with difficulty I prevailed to see her, when, with the utmost confusion, she informed me that her father's revenues, which were small, had some years since been mortgaged for four thousand marks; which sum the creditor having called in, and sir David being unable to pay, he had seized upon the whole domain, and they were on the point of retiring to the small house at Dumfries, from whence I had rescued her at the conflagration. My heart was hers; I therefore regarded my property the same; and begging her to be patient for a short time, I left her.

"In the hall I found the myrmidons of

of the law, taking an account of all the furniture of the castle. My person was well known; and the generosity of my uncle, whom the world in general supposed to be my father, was universally talked of. I therefore addressed the principal, and offered my security for the debt and what expence had been incurred, on condition they directly left the dwelling; promising payment in ten days. My offers were not rejected, and acknowledgments on both sides were immediately drawn; and, before sir David or his daughter were acquainted with the business, the whole party had left the castle.

"Sir David, on inquiry, I found with his daughter, arranging some private papers previous to their departure. I entreated admittance, and, with a satisfaction which I neither attempted nor could conceal, said—'My dear sir David, I pray you cease your task—your

tormentors are gone; there is your acquittal; let this disagreeable business be for ever forgotten.'

"The old man appeared astonished, while Ellen, with an emotion of joy and gratitude, would have thrown herself at my feet, but I raised her in my arms.

'Generous, noble young man!' said sir David, 'in saving the life of my child, you also saved mine; and now you give us the means of life; how can I ever requite obligations of such magnitude?

"I still clasped Ellen's hand; by an involuntary motion I bent my knee before her father.—'My venerable friend!' replied I, 'suffer me to aspire to this maid; if I can win her heart, and your consent, the business of my life shall be to make her happy.'

"Ellen blushed, but not with displeasure; and the reply of sir David was such

such as I then wished; in short, behold me, in idea, the happiest of men.

"Not to dwell on a subject that now fills me with disgust to repeat, I was a warm and not an unthrifty lover; our marriage was, however, to be delayed till the mourning for the chief was expired. Both sir David and Ellen supposed me his son; and, as it was of no moment, I let them remain in that error.

"All at this period was preparation for the return of James into Scotland, after his having been detained prisoner in England almost twenty years. The first nobles were hostages for the sum required for his ransom, and I commanded the party that escorted the commissioners to York, in order to conclude the treaty for his liberation and marriage. From thence we continued our route to London, when the king, being wedded to lady Jane Beaufort, returned to Dur-

ham,

ham, where he was exchanged for the hostages, and in great pomp entered Scotland, attended by the chief nobility of both kingdoms.

"For some time nothing was heard but mirth and rejoicing; all the beauties of the country repaired to the city, and seemed to vie with each other in displaying their charms to their sovereign. Among the foremost of these was Ellen, universally admired and followed; but, as my heart pourtrayed her all truth and perfection, suspicion held no place in it. She entered with avidity into all the gaieties of the city, and the simplicity of her character gave way to dress, coquetry, and grandeur. I should perhaps speak more justly, if I said the manners of the town awoke the dormant qualities of her mind, which, I have since had sufficient conviction, were naturally corrupt and depraved.

"One of the king's hostages dying

in

in England, was replaced, as by agreement, with one of equal rank; and again I had the command of the escort to Durham. This business employed some time. On my return, I found sir David and his daughter were retired to their castle. Some half-words that reached me, in a less confidential mind, might have inspired suspicion; but I regarded them only as the effect of envy at superior merit, until De Bourg and Ross both assured me, it was the received opinion that Ellen, dazzled with the wealth and superior rank of the earl of Roskelyn, received his addresses; and that he was even then a visitor at their dwelling. Infatuated with love, I threw the whole blame on her father, and resolved to lose no time in hastening to her, assured that, once supported by my presence, she would assert her own affection and my prior claim.

"I immediately took the way to sir David's,

David's, and, on reaching the castle, though the apartments were illuminated, I was informed by the vassals that sir David and his daughter had left it the day before. Highly dissatisfied with this reply, I took no time for rest, but proceeded to the castle of Monteith, where I had appointed to meet Ross, Hamilton, De Bourg, and James M'Gregor. To them I imparted what had passed, and claimed their assistance and advice what measures to pursue.

"The result of these deliberations was, to try once more to gain admittance, which, if we found impracticable, at all hazards to see and converse with Ellen.

"This plan arranged, we departed, with a small retinue. Again I demanded admittance at the castle of sir David, and was again refused, though, at the same time, I saw some of the vassals of the lord Roskelyn at the gate. My rage was now at its height; I rode back

back and joined my comrades, who warmly entered into my affronts. Sir David was too old to meet my anger, and lord Roskelyn not only appeared below it, but was also, I felt with horror, my brother.

"We rode leisurely along, conversing on what had passed, when, on a declivity beneath us, we saw a company of horsemen, gaily accoutred, and among them two women, one of whom I distantly recognised by her air for Ellen, as I did some of the men for the mingled vassals of the houses of Stuart and Roskelyn, by the emblazonment of their habits. Prudence is not the characteristic of youth. I was half frantic at the sight, and my comrades warmly entering into my feelings, we vowed revenge; and, therefore, taking a circuit of the height on which we were, at the entrance of the valley suddenly met and surprised them.

"Two

"Two vassals preceded the party, after which rode sir David and, to my great astonishment, lady Roskelyn, followed by the earl and Ellen; the whole cavalcade being closed by their respective domestics.

"To paint the confusion this encounter occasioned is beyond my power. The party of sir David and Roskelyn, for number, doubled ours; but to make up that deficiency, we were better armed, and, accustomed to the rude encounters of war, were strangers to fear. My friends crossed the path, so that no one could pass, while I rode up, and addressing sir David, demanded a conference with him.

"The old man hesitated, looked confused, and entreated me to call on him on the morrow; but this I peremptorily denied, well knowing, if I let that opportunity escape, all future attempts to see him would prove fruitless.

"Lady

"Lady Roskelyn appeared trembling and irresolute; she, I believe, had not seen me since my boyish days, and perhaps fearing to rouse my passion to say harsh truths, remained silent.

"Ellen was pale, and seemed ready to fall from her horse; while lord Roskelyn, with haughty pride, approaching me, asked how I dared to bar their way?

'John of Roskelyn,' replied I, 'if you know not ere this my claim to Ellen Stuart, know it now; she is mine by her own free will and the consent of her father, and the man who attempts to annihilate that claim must either lose or take a life.'

'The son of M'Crae,' returned he ironically, 'can have no claim to the daughter of sir David Stuart: yet, though thou art far beneath my sword, I will not bear thy arrogance.'

"Though raging with anger, the bit-
terness

terness of contempt for a moment predominated, and, fixing my eyes with significant earnestness on the lady Roskelyn, I replied—'In faith, like enough: M'Crae, though not of noble blood, was likely a gallant fellow, and fine ladies have sometimes strange fancies; Katie M'Crae was not my mother, and might serve her mistress in more ways than one. 'Tis a cunning man that knows his own child; and those who were not otherwise told, might as soon take *me* for the heir of Roskelyn as thyself.'

'Out upon thee, slanderer!' exclaimed the lady Roskelyn: 'thank God, the king is returned, and will see justice done. The partiality of the duke of Albany, and, since his death, that of his son Murdoch, hath nourished this insolence in thee.'

'I pray ye, mother, cease,' said John of Roskelyn, 'this is no time for words:' then

then addressing me, he added—'Let the women and sir David pass; thou and I can decide this contest.'

'Willingly; I consent to the last condition; but, by my soul, Ellen returns not to the castle, till I have spoken with her; so arrange it to thy liking.'

'Thus then,' said he, drawing his sword, and attacking me with a violence which I returned with equal heat; his vassals in the mean time, endeavouring to join him, but were kept off by my friends. Passion on both sides was too high to suffer the contention to be lasting, and I disarmed and slightly wounded my adversary.—'Take your son, woman!' exclaimed I, addressing lady Roskelyn; 'though you can forget *your* child, I cannot forget *my* brother.

"She made no reply; the domestics busied themselves in binding up her son's wound, and prepared to bear him

to

to the castle. I still insisted on conversing with Ellen, who either had, or pretended to have swooned, and was supported by one of the vassals, who had lifted her from her horse.

"My party kept that of Roskelyn in awe; I approached, her eyes were still closed, and I was not likely to obtain any reply, when a sudden resolution seized me; it was to bear her away to the castle of Monteith, and there to end the contention by being united to her by the rights of the church—a step my self-love flattered me she would gladly acquiesce in.

"This resolve was instantly executed; I lifted her from the ground, and, with the assistance of one of my men, placed her gently before me on my charger; and, in spite of the threats and entreaties of her father, the impotent rage of Roskelyn, the virulence of his mother,

or

or the faint opposition of their vassals, bore her away, escorted by my friendly comrades.

"Notwithstanding every persuasion, and repeated asseverations of being compelled to act as I had done, she remained silent for some miles. At length we reached a lone spot near Kenardie, halting at a small house inhabited by a vassal of sir James Ross, where we proposed to refresh and rest for the night, the evening being far advanced. Soon after our entrance, my comrades left me alone with Ellen, whom I once more entreated to break the cruel silence she had so long preserved; repeating, that necessity alone had obliged me to have recourse to violence; that she was dearer to me than life; and if, as she had frequently declared, I was equally so to her, I conjured her to consent that the following day, at the first church we reached, we might be united.

"She

"She heard me through without interruption, then replied, though she blushed and cast down her eyes as she spoke—'I need not tell you, St. Clair, that my inclination followed the will of my father, when he consented to give you my hand; but then both he and myself considered you, if not by marriage, at least the son of the noble chief Monteith. We have been deceived; you owe your being to a common trader or fisherman, who, practising on the chief's weakness, succeeded in persuading him to adopt you, and for the property you now hold, by the forbearance of the house of Roskelyn, be assured it will speedily be claimed, and yourself condemned to your original state. Our contract is therefore void; I render you back your vows, be you equally generous, for we can never be more nearly connected than at this moment.'

"Naturally haughty, and loving to excess,

excess, you may better imagine than I can describe the effect this speech had on me; it proved at once that, for myself, I was of no estimation in her eyes; but, as the heir of Monteith only, had been received, until a wealthier fool offering, I necessarily gave place.

" Stung with this reflection, my pride supported me.—' 'Tis well, Ellen,' I replied; ' I thank you for this early proof of your prudence; some time hence, had we been united, it might have given me pain. That I am not the son of Monteith you are well informed; but you must seek another father for me than M'Crae, to whom I owe in truth some great obligations, though not of the filial kind, and which I commend you to require an explanation of from lady Roskelyn.'

" The coolness with which I spoke astonished and confused her.—' If,' said she, " you are not the son of M'Crae, why

why not declare it? cast back the reproach where 'tis due, and openly reveal your family.'

"Whatever secret reasons appeared strong enough to induce the noble Monteith to adopt me, might surely, in a bosom interested in my favour, announce that he deemed me at once worthy his name and fortune; but never shall either be prostituted to purchase a hand without a heart; Monteith rejects that which would be denied to St. Clair M'Crae: your vows are again yours, lady, and my heart shall be mine own until it meets a more disinterested partner.'

"Ellen, no doubt, had prepared herself for prayers, supplications, and abject submission; she was therefore at once disappointed and vexed.—'The lord of Roskelyn,' said she, 'with manly openness wooes me for his bride; and can you suppose I will offend my father, and

cast

cast from me rank and affluence, for one who, wrapped in mystery, refuses me the explanation I ask?'

'I do not desire it,' replied I; 'but remember this truth, Ellen—however you may be the *nominal*, you will never be the *real* countess of Roskelyn.'

'That is not in your power to prevent,' replied she, 'unless you kill me.'

'No, on my honour and faith,' answered I, laughing, 'not only *your* life, but also that of your destined husband, is safe for me, provided he observes a line of conduct which I approve.'

'Think you, replied she, with increased passion, 'that the lord of Roskelyn will be dictated to by you? and for me, bear me back to my father, or you shall bitterly repent this insolence.'

'At the first streak of day,' replied I, 'all shall be ready for that purpose. Had you favoured me with a few words at our meeting this morning, you would

have been spared this affront, which I now repent as much as you can condemn.'

'Think you I will pass the night among a licentious crew of robbers, and particularly with one who, with the violence of a ruffian, hath set law at defiance, and torn me from my father's protection?'

"Contempt was stronger in my breast than anger, and I replied with provoking coldness—'Sleep in security, fair Ellen; not the slumbers of holy vestals shall be more sacred than thine; nay, to re-assure thee, and remove all distrust from thy mind, know, that were we two *now* cast on a dessert shore, unmarked by the foot of man, our race should end with us, rather than I break on thy quiet.'

"This speech appeared to provoke her beyond any thing that had passed; for she burst into tears. The sight, I confess,

confess, staggered my courage; but summoning all the fortitude I possessed, I resolved to perish rather than shew myself the slave of arrogance and avarice; I however entreated her to compose herself, and take some refreshment.

"The torrent having somewhat subsided, she at length said more calmly—'However duty may impel a child to submit to a parent, yet surely, St. Clair, you owe me an explanation to what I asked. If you are wronged, why not proclaim it? or, if secret reasons preponderate, they surely could not extend to me.'

'Nor did they; but you should have questioned, instead of accused. Had any one condemned, or even judged *you*, could *I* have acted thus? Surely no.—Ellen, the heiress of a throne, or the daughter of a cottager, would have had equal claim on *my* heart; I should

have loved her for herself alone, not for the paltry distinctions of birth or fortune.'

"Our discourse was considerably longer, but all to the same purport; for, however I suffered internally, I appeared to bear it unmoved, until at length we parted for the night.

"On informing my friends what had passed, and that I resolved to bear Ellen back the ensuing morning, they applauded the measure; and, lest we should meet with any disagreeable encounter in the performance of our design, Hamilton and Ross collected to the number of fifty of their vassals, who dwelt at a short distance; and thus prepared, all was ready at day-break.

"Ellen soon after appeared; she was more calm, but sullen; and, taking some slight refreshment, mounted the horse provided for her. I begged two of my

friends

friends to attend on each side her beast; and for myself, I rode first, and led the cavalcade."

"Alack, poor Ellen!" interrupted Ambrosine; "now, St. Clair, am I convinced that thou never truly loved her; for, hadst thou, thou wouldst have doubted, demurred, questioned, and endeavoured to find out excuses for her conduct; not like a rigid, inexorable judge, at once have pronounced a decree from whence there was no appeal. In truth, had it been me, thou shouldst have found the difference."

"Faith, I believe it," replied De Bourg; "but he had been accustomed to treat her like a petted wayward child; and, when she offended him, he roused all the mastery he possessed to punish her. Oh the follies that I have witnessed, that love, or its cousin-german, insanity, hath made him commit! not

a dotard of eighty, who languishes for an heir from a wife of eighteen, could have exceeded him; believe me, he is a partial historian; but I can refresh his memory. It was not four thousand marks that cleared sir David; for, to my knowledge, in other debts, he paid double that sum: add to this, not a travelling silk merchant, or Jew dealer in trinkets, visited the city, but Ellen sighed, languished, and pined for velvets, satins, silks, laces, rings, bracelets, and necklaces, until she had drained his pockets, and his uncle's coffers, to obtain them. Marry, hadst thou wedded her, thy first child ought to have been born ready dressed and dizened for its christening."

"Though I cannot entirely disprove this," replied Monteith laughing, "it is not generous, chevalier, to tear up follies so long expiated and forgiven."

"Who

"Who told thee they were forgiven?" replied De Bourg; "a whole life is not too long for the expiation."

"Who told me!" repeated Monteith, "marry, an internal evidence, which thy gross nature cannot comprehend. Did I not expiate the follies of my boyish days in purgatory here, till Heaven, of its mercy, sent pardon and happiness in the form of Ambrosine?"

"A truce, good sirs," said she, "my interruption hath broken upon the story. I pray thee, Monteith, proceed."

"Not to-night, my love," replied he; "I am weary of the monotony of my own voice, and regard it some expiation for former errors to be obliged to repeat them."

"Be it so," replied she: "Randolph, reach me my harp; and thou, Phillippa, take thy lute; we will endeavour to harmonize thy father's feelings."

Ambrosine was immediately obeyed; and the power of music so beguiled the hours, that curiosity was suspended, and Monteith's story not regretted.

CHAPTER. V.



On the ensuing evening, Randolph, who was the most anxious to hear Monteith's relation, prayed him to continue, which he did as follows:

" Behold us then journeying to the castle of sir David; Ellen escorted by Ross and Hamilton, myself in the front, and carefully avoiding to look at the fatal beauty, whom I had resolved to tear from my heart.

"We passed three small detachments which were in pursuit of Ellen; but we were too formidable to be attacked, or perhaps our destination, which was the road to the valley, led them to surmise all was amicably concluded. Towards

evening we reached the castle, and, sounding the horn, the gates were opened, and I demanded to speak to sir David.

" The old man, accompanied by lady Roskelyn, and surrounded by his vassals, immediately attended. The lord Roskelyn, I found, was confined by his wound. I first spoke.—' Sir David,' said I, ' I come to crave your excuse for the warmth of yesterday; I laboured under a mistake that I would you had suffered your daughter to rectify, without obliging me to have recourse to violence. I however return her safe, as she herself can testify."

" Ellen, in the mean time, had dismounted, and joined her father and lady Roskelyn.—' Say, Ellen,' said sir David, ' doth he speak truly? do I receive thee safe, my child?'

' From personal violence I have escaped,' replied she, with bitterness; ' but

'but have been treated with insolence, contempt, and disrespect.'

'How, I pray you, fair maid?' answered I; you first condemned me unheard, and then asked questions I did not choose to answer, but referred you to the countess of Roskelyn. Say, lady, did I not well? *our* private history is not for all ears.'

"The anger of lady Roskelyn at this speech, exceeded all bounds; but it found vent in words, she bestowing on me every invective that illiberality and malice could suggest. To this burst I gave way, or, rather, I fanned the flame; for finding she had railed herself out of breath, I bowed and thanked her, saying, I received her chidings as the rebuke of a *parent*.

'Villainous deceiver;' exclaimed she, 'the kingdom of Scotland shall not hold thee and me; at the foot of the throne

of James the first will I cry aloud for justice on thee!'

'At the foot of the altar, lady, though not much used to pray, will I entreat, not for justice, but for pardon for you, lest, at the throne of a greater Sovereign than James, we should be doomed to separate kingdoms to all eternity. A few words more, and I have done. Beat at your breast, and awaken sleeping nature! repent, and I will predict, the path of rectitude will restore what, I am convinced, for many years hath been a stranger to you—peace and security. For you, Ellen,' continued I, turning to her, 'I leave you in the road to wealth; I wished to have led you into that of happiness, but I knew not that you were venal enough to be purchased; had you more dexterously concealed it, and I had found that nothing short of being a countess would

would have made you happy, I might, while I fondly believed myself beloved, have strove to procure you that rank, as well as many other follies I have given into; but I thank you; you tore off the mask in time, and I resign you without a sigh.

"As I concluded, I hastily remounted my horse, before either could reply, and left the court of the castle, where this conference had taken place.

"Though I had hitherto borne all highly, love and vengeance at once distracted my bosom; in three days, a burning fever raged in my veins, and, for fourteen more, confined me to my bed. My senses restored, I blushed at my folly, and resolved not to let my enemies triumph in my weakness. Accompanied by my constant friends, I crossed to France, where we passed some months, and where I recovered sufficiently

ciently to assume the appearance, if not the reality, of tranquillity.

"While in Paris, I received letters by an especial messenger sent by sir Alexander M'Gregor; these were not only to inform me, but also my friends, that a criminal suit had been entered against us by sir David Stuart, for forcibly carrying off his daughter (who was now wedded to the earl of Roskelyn,) and detaining her a whole night, during which, though she escaped with honour, she suffered the most cruel anxiety and fear. There was likewise against me a second complaint; this was exhibited by the dowager of Roskelyn and her son: it set forth that I, in conjunction with a low-born man, named M'Crae, by falsehood and unlawful arts, had practised and wrought upon the weakness of the late chief Monteith, and so far beguiled him, as at length to persuade

persuade him to make me heir to his possessions; praying to have his will annulled, and made void; and that also an injunction might be issued, forbidding me, on the highest penalties, any longer to use a name I so highly disgraced. In addition to this intelligence, sir Alexander informed us, we were cited to appear in six weeks to answer these accusations (three of which were already elapsed); and that a non-appearance would subject us to the forfeiture of our estates, and to our being declared outlaws.

"This intelligence on my own account, would have given me but little uneasiness; but the idea of having thus involved my friends almost distracted me.

"We lost no time, but hastened home. The parliament was held at Perth, where we surrendered, to answer the crimes alledged against us.

"The

"The appointed day arrived; the king and some of the first nobles in the land sat as our judges. My having been favoured by the duke of Albany, without other cause, would have been sufficient to condemn me; but my enemies did not even trust to that, for I observed that my judges were the picked friends of the houses of Stuart and of Roskelyn.

"Myself and my companions were brought forward, and sir David's accusation first preferred. To support this, it was absolutely necessary to call in the evidence of Ellen and the dowager. As the former entered the court of justice, never before had I thought her so beautiful; but my heart, far from fluttering as it was wont at her approach, recoiled with disgust, while an aguish coldness ran through my veins. She entered, supported by her lord and by her father; and the king himself graciously desired her

her to be of good courage, as much depended on her evidence.

"Resolved to afford her no triumph, I fixed my eyes strongly upon her, and, with a half-smile, which I confess was forced, waited for her to prefer her complaint.

"The eye of Ellen sunk beneath the scrutiny of mine; she trembled, the blood forsook her cheek, and her father and husband in vain entreated her to resume her spirits; she hesitated, but could, notwithstanding all their persuasions and her own efforts, at last only say—'I was forced from the protection of my father, detained many hours in a lone house, where I underwent the most violent alarms.'

"To obtain farther from her was impossible, and she was led from the hall by her lord. The evidence of sir David, John of Roskelyn, and others who witnessed the deed, was next heard; and the

the whole being concluded, I was called upon for my defence.

"I acknowledged the seizing the lady, but palliated the action, by declaring that my only motive was to be assured from her own lips, whether she favoured John of Roskelyn; that, from our former contract, I had flattered myself with being in possession of her heart; but, on a conviction of the contrary, I had immediately restored her to her father.

"That for my friends, Ross, M'Gregor, Hamilton, and De Bourg, they were even unacquainted with the deed till it was committed; on which account I prayed that, whatever might be the forfeiture, they might be exempt.

"One of the judges replied--My defence by no means palliated my fault; that if I escaped punishment, every man who could not gain leave or opportunity to urge his suit to a lady, might think

think himself authorized to have recourse to violence; that for my friends, though not principals, yet being accessaries in the same daring outrage, it was but just that they should be punished accordingly. For the escape of the lady, he attributed that more to Providence and her own chastity, than to my virtue: and finally concluded by saying, if I had ought more to urge, to declare it before they proceeded to sentence.

"This reply, though no more than I expected from the partiality of my judges, nevertheless provoked me to anger, and I answered with heat—'That I had no wish to detain the court, but must observe, that neither Providence nor the chastity of the lady were more interested in the preservation of her virtue than myself; true it was that I had her in my power, but that I was no ravisher, and where I could no longer esteem, I ceased to love.'

"To

"To end this part of my relation, the court, after some little demur, proceeded to pronounce the penalty of our crime. I was sentenced to a fine of six hundred marks; my companions to one of an hundred each.

"Such was the result of the first accusation. On the second, which took place the ensuing day, I stood alone as a culprit; but my constant friends were as near me as possible.

"The dowager of Roskelyn first gave in her testimony against me; she recapitulated what I have before informed you, namely, the arts used by M'Crae, his wife, and myself, in order to ingratiate me in the favour of the late chief, to the detriment of her, his sister, and of his nephew, the present lord of Roskelyn.

"How conscious is guilt! during the whole time she spoke, her eyes were fixed on the ground, and her voice and complexion

complexion testified the conflict she felt within.

"John of Roskelyn's complaint was but the echo of his mother's. I revelled, he said, in the wealth of his uncle, and disgraced a name never before dishonoured.

"In answer to these accusations, I now held myself free to declare all I knew, and which I corroborated by the testimony of friar Thomas, and the oaths signed by M'Crae and his wife. The paternal affection of the chief for me was also testified by my friends; but nothing appeared strong enough to throw guilt on so fair a fame as that of the dowager of Roskelyn. The oaths of M'Crae and his wife were merely regarded as fabricated to deceive the chief, and the asseverations of father Thomas treated as a gross and purchased deceit. In short, I was condemned to surrender all that Monteith had bequeathed me, to relin-

quish

quish his name, and to be outlawed for life in the Western Isles."

Randolph, whose heart beat high at the recital of his father's wrongs, could bear no more, but starting up, exclaimed—"Now, shame and disgrace be mine, if I follow not that lord Roskelyn through the world! My brother James, and also the young St. Clair, as their years increase will catch my ardour, and revenge their father, or die."

Though pleased with the affection the heart of Randolph bespoke, Monteith replied with marked earnestness—"Randolph, my arm is yet strong enough to defend itself; I thank thy duty and affection; but note me well, if thou attemptest ought against the lord of Roskelyn, my curse will rest on thee."

Randolph started, and looked astonished, but made no reply.

"Remember," continued Monteith, with more gentleness, "that he is my brother

brother—the same blood purples our veins—one mother bore us; and be assured, the time will yet come, when thou wilt see her, *unforced*, do justice. Have I not already my revenues restored? and I have no doubt time will accomplish the rest."

"Pardon me," replied Randolph; "they must love a father less than I do, who can hear of such oppressions unmoved."

"I thank thee, my generous boy; thou thinkest with the warmth of youth—I begin to judge with the coolness of age; I *pity* the lord of Roskelyn—he *hath already* his punishment. But to proceed.

"The sentence was no sooner pronounced than I was commanded to deliver up my sword; for as I had voluntarily surrendered, it had not been taken from me.

"To be disarmed was a disgrace I did not choose to submit to.—'My sword,'

said

said I with heat, 'belonged to my ever-honoured and lamented uncle, the chief Monteith, and never will I resign it!'

'Yield the sword,' repeated the king; 'if it belonged to the chief Monteith, it now appertains to the earl of Roskelyn; therefore to his hand resign it.

"John of Roskelyn, with visible exultation, advanced towards me. I took no time for reflection; my passions were my masters; and had even James himself, at that moment, come in contact with me, I had acted the same: I seized Roskelyn, and threw him with violence from me.—'Dastard, knave!' exclaimed I, 'learn thy distance; did I think my blood of the quality of thine, I would seek to prove it bastard. Earn the sword of Monteith,' continued I, unsheathing it; 'to gain it, thou must take a life.'

"Alas! my passion involved my friends

friends in my misfortunes; drawing my weapon appeared the signal for all to do the same, and the hall of justice in a moment became a scene of confusion. The courtly moths instantly fluttered round the torch of royalty, as though we meant to extinguish it; and the cry of *treason! treason!* in voices rendered shrill by fear, as those of women, echoed through the court.

"A detachment of soldiers immediately rushed in, with sir Duncan Keith at their head. The veteran had served with my uncle, and I was well known to him. His party surrounded us, and a parley ensued, when we were all ordered to resign our weapons—a command we refused to obey. 'Never!' exclaimed I, 'shall it be said that a pupil of the gallant Monteith laid down his sword at the command of a tyrant. Should I act so unworthily, truly should I prove myself an alien to his name and blood.

blood. To the name of Roskelyn I resign all claim; and, so help me Heaven! if I would not sooner be for ever M'Crae, than take the accursed title, if I were to resemble those who now bear it.'

"A cry to wrest our weapons from us was again repeated, and again we persisted to die with them in our grasp. Among the soldiers we had all been universally beloved; therefore, though they surrounded us, no attempt was made to annoy us. Sir Duncan Keith, approaching the king, spoke to him in a low voice, but with much energy; to which he at length answered, though with heat—'Act as you please,' or words to that import.

"Sir Duncan then advancing towards us, said—'I grieve to see men, heretofore so warmly attached to their country and king, so far forget themselves as to have recourse to such desperate measures; ye are but five, and your

your lives would be only the sacrifice of a moment; yet, through an unwarrantable pride, ye would sooner lose them than obey the commands of your sovereign. For me, I set the example of peace; I sheath my sword, and order my soldiers to do the same.' Sir Duncan, as he spoke, replaced his weapon in the scabbard, as did also his men—an example that was instantly followed by myself and friends; and, without farther contention, we were committed to his care, at the common guard.

"The whole country expected that our punishment would have been nothing less than death; but if the mercy of James did not spare us, the prudence of his ministers prevailed, to save the effusion of blood such a step would have occasioned.

"After much deliberation, we were all condemned to banishment in the

 island

island of Barra, and to suffer all the pains and penalties of outlaws, should we return from thence; but my estate was alone decreed forfeit, according to the former sentence.

"A strong detachment of soldiers escorted us to our destination, in the tower of M'Leod, where we found a garrison of twelve men, who had been placed there as our guards.

"Here our conductors left us; and we had not been landed a week, before my old comrades and friends, who had heard of my disgrace, came from every quarter, offering their services, and cursing my oppressors. Our guard appeared inclined to shew us their power, but, with some little assistance, were soon silenced and disarmed; after which we put them on board a vessel that traded on the coast, and sent them back to Scotland.

"As we remained perfectly quiet, no notice

notice was taken of this affront until the ensuing year, when a much larger party was sent; these we also disposed of in the same manner, making them the bearers of this message—'That, left to ourselves, we were disposed to peace, but would not quietly submit to masters.'

"Some few trifling efforts were afterwards made to subject us; but failing of success, they were at length discontinued; and here ends my history till I met my Ambrosine."

CHAPTER VI.



The ensuing afternoon, in terms passionate as the effusions of a first affection, did Monteith relate the course of his love for Ambrosine, which Randolph but imperfectly knew.—"The jewels she first brought," said he, "were left in the castle of Monteith, and from thence taken by Roskelyn or his wife; but welcome were they to the baubles, since they brought me acquainted with thee, my love.

"The depredations on the domain are, I doubt not, great; and, should I never return to see them, will, I trust, be repaired by those I leave behind; however, I am not without hope; time

and

and chancé happen to all; and I yet flatter myself to pass the days of my old age in the hall of my honoured uncle, and to have my bones deposited by his side."

Monteith then minutely recapitulated every event until the time that he and his friend were surprised and made prisoners.—"Our business being concluded," continued he, "we departed from Benbecula, in order to return to Barra; the party, you know, consisted of only sir James Ross, myself, and the men whom we took to navigate our little vessel.

"We had not long left the island, when we observed a ship under Danish colours right in our course—the same vessel I had noticed the day before at anchor on the coast. Though the wind was fair, she appeared to sail heavily, and make no way. When we drew near her, great confusion appeared on board,

 and

and on being hailed by our men, they replied, their vessel had sprung a leak, and that, not having a sufficient number of hands to keep the water from rising, it gained upon them very fast; they therefore implored our assistance, which, they affirmed, would speedily free them from danger.

"Their claim on our pity and succour was too strong to be denied. Ross, myself, and one of our men, leaped on board, leaving our swords in our own vessel. Two of the Danes led the way to the hold; but we were no sooner between decks, than we were surrounded by ten armed men, who sprung upon us, saying we were prisoners; sir James and myself instantly drew forth our dirks, and wounded three of the assailants; we were, however, soon overpowered by numbers, and disarmed. Thus, Randolph, I lost the dirk that gave thee such alarm.

"Raging

"Raging almost to madness, I demanded for what purpose this treachery was practised; but they carefully evaded answering all questions, only saying, that no farther violence was intended, unless they were compelled to it by any attempt to regain our liberty.

"They then left us under a guard of six men, in the cabin, while some of them forced the man that remained on board our vessel to enter theirs. We were soon after informed by the leader of the villains, whom I afterwards knew to be M'Lellan, that our destination was different, sir James and the men being designed for Denmark, while myself and six of this perfidious crew were to be landed at Ardnamurchan. Not till I received this intelligence, did I in the least suspect the house of Roskelyn to be concerned in this dark transaction; but this at once unravelled the mystery,

and led me to suspect that murder was to conclude the business.

"Opposition and complaint were useless. To Ross, who I trusted would at some future period reach the island, I commended my wife and children; and, after having embraced, we separated.

"Re-embarking on board our own vessel, the Dane left us; and, with my six villainous guards only, I reached the destined port. On landing, we walked some miles over a lone and desolate tract, when we reached a cottage, which was that of M'Lellan, where we found only an old woman, and two more of the crew.

"I was shewn to a chamber, and food brought; but no means of escape appeared possible, for my guards constantly relieved each other in their watch on the outside of the house.

The

"The noise of vulgar mirth, occasioned by intoxication and mingled triumph, continued some hours; and by what discourse I heard, I am convinced the party were of that daring and blood-thirsty set, known in the Highlands by the appellation of *Kattarins*.

"Near the close of day, M'Lellan, I found, left them; for, being only in the next apartment, I could hear almost every word. He however returned early in the morning; and, from what I could gather, I was to be removed on the ensuing night.

"During the day I tried the effect of promised bribes upon M'Lellan; but my offers were of no avail, and I was forced to submit.

"In the evening I left the cottage, attended by six guards; and towards midnight we reached the Castle of the



Valley, which indeed I judged, from its lonely situation, to be intended for either my prison, or the scene of my death. Sir David had been dead some years, and that domain, with its small revenues, had fallen to his daughter, the lady Roskelyn.

"On our entrance, I saw no one but the old porter at the gate, M'Lellan leading the way to the hall, where I expected at least to find the whole family assembled, but was much astonished to see only the countess.

"Though so many years had elapsed since I saw her, her beauty was yet dazzling, but not a trace of that innocence and simplicity, which first caught my heart, remained; her manners are bold and assuming, and the only expression of her eye pride and contempt. Though the beautiful symmetry of her features yet remain, they are strongly marked

by

by the tyrant passions that rule within her, and keep her not only at variance with others, but also with herself.

"On our entrance into the hall, she ordered the guard to retire.—'Is it possible,' said she, her eyes sparkling with malicious joy, 'that the valiant and undaunted St. Clair, who sets kings at defiance, and laughs at their power, should be conquered by a woman? Revenge is now mine, and canst thou expect mercy?'

'I neither ask nor expect it,' I replied, 'and would sooner perish than receive a favour from thee.'

'What, not for the sake of the heiress of Kintail—the gentle, love-sick Ambrosine, the wife of thy bosom?'

'Woman,' interrupted I, 'learn to respect virtues thou canst not comprehend. For the heiress of Kintail, or rather as thou sayest, for the wife of my heart, dearer to me than the blood that gives

gives it motion, gladly would I sacrifice all but honour; and honour and thou can never assimilate.

'Remember,' said she, passionately, 'that thou art in my power; and let that knowledge teach thee prudence, lest I be tempted to use it.'

'Do so; call in thy myrmidons—they are worthy their employer: but where is John of Roskelyn? is he sunk so low as to delegate thee to transact this business?'

'Neither John of Roskelyn nor his aspiring *chaste* mother, have to claim ought in this enterprise; 'tis mine own, and I glory in it; they, it is true, have ere now, sighed and wished Monteith in their power; but I pursued the means, and have accomplished my purpose.'

'True, you have, by fraud and meanness; what is to follow?'

'That, even by myself, is undetermined. Meanness I deny; and stratagem

gem was necessary. The brave and wise do not always attack a lion openly, but sometimes entangle him in a net, or foil him in a trap.'

"Much more discourse of the same tendency passed between us, but to no purpose, except increasing the bitterness on both sides, until at length she rose in much heat, and going to the door of the hall, called M'Lellan, who immediately obeying the summons, I was conducted to the watch-tower, and a guard set over me.

"During the time I remained a prisoner, I saw the countess several times. My food was regularly served, and good of its kind; and a supposition I first imbibed, that they meant to poison me, insensibly wore off; but imprisonment, and the anxiety of my mind in respect of my wife, children, and friends, insensibly preyed on my spirits, and would inevitably have destroyed me, had not

Heaven

Heaven at length sent succour, in the person of our beloved Randolph.

"I well know M'Lellan was absent one night while I was confined, and which, I conclude, was that on which he and Randolph met. He himself informed me, that he had been vassal to sir David, but, for some years, had been at his own disposal.

"My liberation you all well know; I shall therefore conclude with saying, that, though I trust the lesson I have received will not harden my heart, yet it will in future teach me to give a moment to reflection before I act."

"Dear father, I thank you," said Randolph, as Monteith concluded; "what the countess' future intentions were respecting you, I cannot conjecture; murder, I think it could not be, or she would not so long have delayed it. I much wonder she did not send for her lord, or his mother."

"It

"It hath been agreed in all ages," replied Monteith laughing, "that women's actions are frequently impenetrable; if so, we in vain endeavour to discover the source of hers; perhaps also they were undetermined."

"Thank Heaven, it is over," replied Randolph. "My obligations to that poor damsel that attended lady Roskelyn never can be forgotten; and I would now again willingly enter her hated dwelling, to rescue poor Jean from tyranny."

"Thou hadst indeed great obligations to the maid," replied Monteith; "she attended thee during thy confinement, and a sort of mutual confidence, I think, took place between ye."

"On my part, in nothing material," answered Randolph; "but through her I first gained intelligence of you, for which I shall always love her dearly."

"A hard

"A hard-favoured damsel, rather crooked, and about thirty, is she not?" said De Bourg gravely; "I think as I was sauntering about the castle, I saw such a one at the gate."

"Oh, no," replied Randolph warmly, "she cannot, I think, be more than my own age; her form is straight as an Highland pine, and her face almost as handsome as Phillippa's."

Phillippa blushed—"And you love her as well," returned she, in a tone of reproach, "nay, better, or you would not have said you would again visit that hateful castle for her sake."

"Dear Phillippa, ought I not to do so? for to her, in all probability, I owe my life, and perhaps yet more," glancing his eyes towards Monteith. "I indeed think myself very ungrateful: had it been thee, my sister, no power on earth should have kept me so long away."

The

The whole party were silent, attending to the discourse of Randolph and Phillippa.—"These feelings," continued the youth, "prove the force of blood, of which I have heard and read so much."

"It rather proves the force of nature," replied the chevalier, with an arch smile.

"Is it not the same thing?" inquired Randolph.

"Not quite," said De Bourg; "but I prithee, enter no more into thy schemes of knight-errantry this year; thou gavest the girl money to take her to her friends, and there, for the present, let the business rest."

"I must perforce," said Randolph, "but I forget not my obligations, and long to return them."

"In what manner?" inquired the chevalier.

Randolph hesitated.—"In truth, chevalier."

valier," said he, "I believe you are jesting; but I long to return them as they deserve; I should like to see Jean out of danger, and free from want."

"In the arms of a worthy and deserving husband," said De Bourg.

"I never thought of that," replied Randolph, "but indeed it would be most desirable; would to Heaven she was wedded to some honest man, that would make her happy!"

"Nay, then," replied De Bourg dryly, "if such are your wishes, I will predict that your knight-errantry *will* sleep till next year."

"Chevalier," resumed Randolph, "on my life, I do not comprehend you."

"Heed him not," said Ambrosine, laughing; "he doth not comprehend himself. The afternoon is fine; Phillippa and James will walk with thee on the shore, and enjoy the sea-breeze."

They cheerfully consented, and the party

party divided in different pursuits, leaving Ross, Hamilton, M'Gregor, De Bourg, Monteith, and his wife, to themselves.

CHAPTER VII.



"By my life!" said De Bourg, as soon as they were alone, "but Randolph's question was to the purpose; what the countess' future intentions were toward you, I cannot conjecture; murder, I am convinced, it could not be. As I before said, Monteith, thou art a partial historian; but if thou canst, for once, prithee, be ingenuous, and develop this mystery."

"De Bourg," replied he, "to my friends I have no concealments, nor indeed should I to any of our comrades, after the many instances I have had of their attachment, and the sincere proof of their secrecy in respect to Randolph; but

but the truth is, I have a story to disclose, which for worlds I would not have known to that youth, as hereafter, when informed of his real birth, it would cover him with shame. By my life, could any tint appear through my dark complexion, I should blush for——"

"Not thyself, I hope, St. Clair," said Ross, laughing.

"No; though I have no virtue to boast on that account, for, as I felt no temptation, there was no merit in withstanding the tempter. What I shall relate, I pray you, let ever remain a secret in your own bosoms; Randolph already knows too many of the ill qualities of the countess, for shame to be added to the account, when he learns she is his mother."

"On the second night after my arrival at the castle, I was again conducted to the hall, where, as before, I found the countess; her manners were less haughty

haughty than before, and she entered into conversation with a freedom that astonished me.

'Monteith,' said she, 'thou hast laughed at my weakness and derided my power; I was therefore resolved to convince thee, that I was not so insignificant an enemy as thou thoughtest; neither the dowager nor Roskelyn know of this enterprise; and, by the blessed saints, I mean thee no personal injury.'

'Then why detain me here?' replied I.

'Didst thou not detain me,' said she, 'in a worse place, and where my virgin fame might have fallen a sacrifice?'

'To my shame I confess it; but no advantage was taken of that situation.'

'No; thou offeredst to wed me at the first church in our way; was it not so?'

'It was; but to what doth this recapitulation of follies tend?'

'Thou

'Thou seest my memory yet retains that circumstance, though so many years have elapsed.'

'More happily forgotten than called to remembrance.'

'I think not so: St. Clair, thou wert even then a better warrior than a wooer, or thou hadst not taken a maiden's answer so hastily.'

"I stood in silent astonishment. After a short pause, she continued—'To look on thee, Monteith, no one would conclude outlawry a severe punishment; for thou art scarcely changed. What thinkest thou of me? either the world flatters, or I still retain some of the charms that caught thy heart at Dumfries.'

'My taste in beauty is changed,' replied I, coldly; 'I am therefore no judge.'

'Pish! a wife of sixteen years cannot blind thy sight; I know mankind better.

better. No one can blame thee for marrying the heiress of Kintail; but, in spite of thy anger, St. Clair, even then thy heart was never hers.'

'Were a man to avow that falsehood,' replied I warmly, 'I would proclaim him a liar and a villain. Ambrosine alone was then dearer to mc than life or liberty; and time and possession, instead of lessening, have increased my affection; so that, were we both at this moment free, and she deprived of wealth, beauty, and all the natural graces that raise her above her sex, for her heart and disposition alone would I press her to my bosom, and share the power of empires with her, did I possess them.

"The countess reddened, but appeared to struggle to suppress her passion.—'I but intrude upon you with my folly,' at length said she; 'would you wish to retire?'

'I would first wish,' answered I, 'to

know

know why I am detained here? I have injured no one, particularly you; if you suppose I have, point the remedy.'

'Monteith,' replied she, rising and laying her hand on my arm, while her eyes were strongly fixed on my face, 'canst *thou* point out a remedy for my father's folly, thine own pride, and my infatuation, which fixed me for life in splendid misery?'

"I felt like one struck with lightning.—'Lady,' replied I, recoiling from her touch, ''tis natural that fathers should wish their children great; for my pride, as you call it, let it be for ever forgotten; your refusal hath been productive of such happy consequences to me, that I shall for ever revere and bless the occasion; and for infatuation, there could be none in a connection that gave you an adoring husband, and children, *one* of whom, I am convinced, will stand forth hereafter unrivalled in honour.'

 'You

'You know not John—he is the counterpart of his father; and for Matilda, though at present gentle, unassuming, and affectionate, her character is not fixed. To love the children, Monteith,' continued she with energy, 'it is necessary to esteem their father.'

"You will laugh when I tell you, that I would sooner have been in the front of a battle than engaged in this discourse.—'I can be no judge,' at length said I, 'in affairs of this nature; but the combined honour of the houses of Roskelyn and Stuart will doubtless lead you in a more proper path than can be pointed out by Monteith, or, if you please, by M'Crae the outlaw.'

'Perish the name!' said she, 'and with it the accursed phantom, pride, that fixed me a Roskelyn! St. Clair,' added she, with softness, 'thou once said, thou wishedst to lead me in the path of happiness;

piness; is the road for ever barred—can it never more be opened to Ellen?'

'I trust it may; but I intrude on your patience; I will retire.'

'Say, rather, I intrude on you; is it possible that the man, who hath so often sworn everlasting love and truth to me alone, should be so insensible to my happiness?'

"I turned from her with disgust, and approaching the door, called aloud upon M'Lellan, ordering him to lead the way to the tower.

"The countess remained in silent rage; M'Lellan obeyed; and thus ended our second conference."

"Now, marry," said De Bourg, "hadst thou not called in M'Lellan to defend thy virtue, I know not what might have been the consequence; why, thou stock, thou man of marble, had I been in thy place, I would have returned home in a week; nay, hadst thou loved

thy wife, thou couldst never have acted so foolishly."

"Why, what would you have done?" said Ambrosine.

"Done!" repeated the chevalier: "why, in the first place, I would not have affronted a fair lady; Joseph is no prototype for me; my garment should never have witnessed against me; a man may as well be blamed for something as for nothing."

"In faith, I believe thee," said Hamilton. "But proceed, Monteith; the infamy of that woman is almost without example—at her age too, when it might be supposed the warmth of youth had given place to matronly feelings."

"Poor woman," said Ambrosine, "a slave to her vices, they reign with uncontrolled power over her: had she met with a husband who, by knowing what was due to his own honour, had, in the early period of their marriage, curbed

curbed her follies, she might have proved a better wife, a more tender mother, and a more respectable member of society."

"Thank Heaven, that task was not reserved for me," answered Monteith; "outlawry, imprisonment, nay, death itself, would be preferable to passing even a short period with a woman of such unlicensed passions. But to proceed, though I shall shorten the infamous relation as much as possible.

"We had after this, several conferences, the purport of which, I truly believe, M'Lellan suspected, from some sly words that escaped him. At times she was calm and soothing; at others, the natural bent of her disposition predominated, and she threatened to give me up to the dowager and her son. My conduct was indeed more calculated to increase than to assuage her anger; and I have no doubt but that a secret death

would have concealed her shame and my imprisonment, had not Randolph and our friends released me.

"In one of our conferences, she went so far as to say that she despised and detested her lord; threw the blame on me for not preventing her marriage, and placed all her subsequent imperious conduct to disappointed love and revenge; cursed my wife; and, finally, offered to fly with me to any part of the world I chose.

"No gratitude softened my refusal, but horror gave bitterness to my words; and, putting her from me with more roughness than I had ever before used to a woman, I bid her remember she was my brother's wife.

'Your brother!' repeated she, with acrimony; 'doth he deserve that title, or doth the dowager deserve the name of mother? for the first *believed* the justice of your claim, while he contested it; and

and the last *knows* its justice, while she *denies* it. I remember thou saidst, I might be the *nominal*, but never the *real* countess of Roskelyn; I acknowledge that truth, and feel my borrowed honours sit so heavily upon me, that I would willingly resign them.'

'You have no right,' answered I; 'your children are born to expect them, and never shall my claim disturb their possession; for I abjure the name of Roskelyn for ever, both for me and mine.'

'I thank you for them,' answered she contemptuously; 'in *my* hands is the only proof that can injure them, and there it shall remain.'

"We parted with mutual discontent on both sides; and, after this discourse, I enjoyed the satisfaction of not seeing her for a whole week. At the end of that period, she again informed me, that she should give me up to the family of

 Roskelyn;

Roskelyn; at least inform them that I was in her power.

'Do so,' replied I; 'but remember, James is no more; and the young king already begins, I understand, to think for himself; my estates have been restored, and, though even secret murder should remove me, I have sons to claim my right, and who hereafter, I have no doubt, will have courage to defend it; my death, therefore, can now be of no avail to the house of Roskelyn; neither do I think the dowager or her son would stain their hands with my blood, however they might wish to devote me to poverty and shame. The deed must therefore rest with thee, and let it be speedy; thou hast myrmidons ever ready, and this castle will be the proper scene, as it hath heretofore been of my folly and thy ingratitude.'

'Reproach me Monteith!' exclaimed she; 'a thousand times more welcome

to

to my ears is the sound of reproach than contempt; nay, I will assist thy memory: thou savedst my life at Dumfries; in this hall didst thou pay my father's debts, and afterwards a double sum at Edinburgh; in this hall didst thou plight to me thy faith, and I did accept it; and in this hall, in an accursed hour, did I break my faith to thee, and gave my hand where I could not bestow my heart. Canst thou say more? In the castle of Roskelyn,' continued she, 'covered with jewels, I was miserable; my heart, in spite of myself, was Monteith's; and, however with double acrimony I endeavoured to conceal the painful truth, the warmth with which Ambrosine spoke of thee, stung me to madness; and truly did she say, that '*the proud dames of the south, under their silken canopies, would envy the wife of the out-law of Barra.*'

"I weary myself in repeating the ex-

travagancies of this woman; suffice it, they were all of the same purport, either raging with passion and revenge, or, in her milder moments, offering me liberty, on condition of being my companion. The last three weeks, however, her conduct was more reserved and thoughtful; and, no doubt, her mind was employed how to dispose of me, that her disgrace might never be discovered; she may, however, rest in security; never again will I shame myself by the recital; and, for Randolph's sake, let us, if possible, bury her frailties in oblivion."

"Willingly, on my part," said Ross, "for the only injury I sustained in the business, save my fears for you, were some few days of hunger, which the poor fellows that were fellow-sufferers in my captivity, bore with me with great patience; and that, I understand, the lady Ambrosine hath totally obliterated from their memory by her generosity."

While Monteith was relating to his friends the derogatory conduct of the countess, Randolph, with Phillippa and James, had climbed a hill on the sea-shore, where James diverted himself with the exercise of his bow, while the two former sat upon the height, viewing the vast expanse of sea and sky.—"Brother," said Phillippa, "why art thou serious above thy usual custom? thou wishedst to hear my father's story, and, though he has been unjustly treated, there is nothing now to grieve thee; for we have him safe at home, and I doubt not but that he will be careful in future."

"I trust he will," answered Randolph.

"What then makes thee sigh, and caused thee to be so silent as we walked?"

"Nay, I know not; my own folly perhaps."

"Whate'er

"Whate'er it be, if it makes thee sad, I will gladly bear a part—may I not know the cause?"

"Sweet sister," replied Randolph, "I shame almost to tell thee my thoughts, though I know, at my request, thou wilt not reveal them, as they might displease my father."

"Never to injure thee, Randolph; but perhaps thou hast mistaken something, for I am convinced thou art, if possible, lately doubly beloved by both our parents."

"Yet, Phillippa, is it not strange that, in the recital of the events of my father's life, he never mentioned *my* mother? Was she such a character that his heart shrunk at the idea, and his tongue refused to mention her name? What is still more strange, he doth not appear to have had any former attachment, except his predilection in favour of the countess of Roskelyn."

"It

"It is strange, indeed," answered she; "some reason, though doubtless not a material one, occasioned the omission. In my early youth, I ever thought my mother was thine; but, after thy departure, she undeceived me; but, finding me curious, she cut the matter short, by saying—'Randolph is worthy thy most sisterly affection; his blood is noble on the side of his mother, as well as of his father, and never, I predict, will he disgrace it."

"If so," answered Randolph, "the more wonderful it should be concealed; yet our friends, when I mentioned the circumstance once to them, assured me the same."

"I will relate to thee an observation I made during my mother's sickness, which has led me to form a conjecture, which I, however, never before disclosed. Sir Alexander M'Gregor visited us; and to him she recommended us all,

but

but most particularly thee.—'See,' said she, 'my noble friend, that dear boy hath his right, if ye would that Monteith's soul and mine should rest; for his claim on the house of M'Gregor, if he prove the generous lad I think him, never will he accept it.' Sir Alexander swore to what my mother required; but no farther explanation took place; but it hath given me an idea that I will disclose to thee: What claim canst thou have on the house of M'Gregor, unless by thy mother? and tenderness, or some other cause, may make our father cautious of naming her before James M'Gregor, whose sister, I conclude, she was."

"Dearest Phillippa, thy understanding far outstrips thy years; for I have no doubt thou hast judged rightly, and the thought gives me pleasure: what also corroborates the surmise, is, that I am named after Randolph."

James

James Monteith, weary with his sport, at that moment joined them, and they retook their way to the fortress, both entirely convinced, that their sagacity had discovered the secret that had so long puzzled the mind of Randolph to develop.

CHAPTER VIII.



While peace, health, and harmony, reigned among the inhabitants of the rude and uncultivated coast of Barra, sorrow, disease, and death, visited the gilded chambers of the castle of Roskelyn. Two days after the escape of Monteith from the power of the countess, her vexation and despair were in some measure diverted into another channel, by a messenger arriving to inform her, that her son lay at the point of death, from an epidemic fever.

Foiled in her designs on Monteith, she resolved to return to Roskelyn; for though no duty to her husband, or maternal affection to her children, influenced

fluenced her conduct, she had now an opportunity of gaining credit for both; while, at the same time, the occasion would save her those concessions to her lord, that her leaving his house might otherwise appear to demand, and to which her haughty spirit was not inclined to submit.

To the great joy of the youthful Jean, she departed the ensuing day, but reached the castle only in time to hear the groans of her agonized lord, and the cries of his mother, who, two hours before her arrival, had witnessed the death of the heir to their vast possessions. Though the countess possessed none of the tender feelings which distinguish a mother, the death of her son gave a blow to her consequence, which made her at once weep for him and for herself: should her lord likewise die, an event she before was regardless of, the loss of her son had placed an insuperable bar to her

her future power: for, as the estate was confined to the male line, the lady Matilda could only claim a fortune befitting her rank and name; 'tis true, she herself might yet bear children; but as, for the last twelve years, no event of that sort had taken place, she despaired of so desirable a circumstance.

The death of lord John sat heavily on the heart of his father: but yet more so on the dowager, who, now approaching to sixty, began to feel that her days were numbered, and that a review of her past life afforded no consolation, either for the present or for the future.

The sudden and mysterious capture of the young Montrose, the first-born of the earl of Roskelyn, and now the death of his second son, in the bloom of sixteen, made her feel that the hand of Heaven was upon her, and that, though it may be slow to punish, the hour of retribution will come. For her son's

wife,

wife, she loved her not; even their similarity of disposition made them foes; for, both haughty, vindictive, and overbearing, neither would yield sway to the other: no sooner, therefore, were the rites of the church performed, and the dead youth deposited with the ashes of his ancestors, than the dowager retired to an estate she had in the vicinity of Stirling, and there alone brooded over her sorrows.

Not so the countess; a short time removed from her even the semblance of sorrow; and her lord, still a slave to the fascination of her charms, again submitted to the yoke of her tyrant spirit.

Fearful lest he, by some other less palliating means, might learn the capture of Monteith, she herself informed him of it, and also of his subsequent flight; but the *motive* she gave for her conduct was far wide of truth: Vexed, she said, at being at variance with her lord,

lord, she was resolved to show him that his interest was still dear to her, by seizing on his greatest enemy, whom she meant to resign to him, had she not been disappointed by his escape.

"Right glad am I that he did so," replied the earl; "the estate of Roskelyn is enough for me; I grieve that of Monteith was ever contested for: by will he is truly my uncle's heir; and for some cause we are afflicted: let us tempt the anger of Heaven no farther."

Whatever were the intentions of the countess, who still languished for revenge, she, for the present, concealed her rancour, and seemed to act in perfect acquiescence with her lord.

The confusion over which the death of lord John occasioned, Jean requested her dismissal, which was granted with some difficulty by her mistress, who, however, ere they parted, proved the truth of the adage, that guilt is ever

suspicious;

suspicious; for, looking on her sternly, she said—"Let whatever passed during my absence from the castle of Roskelyn be a secret, or thou and I are foes."

The first gust of grief passed, the lord Roskelyn formed a plan for visiting England—a scheme that entirely met with the approbation of the countess, as it would enable her to display that grandeur which constituted the whole of her happiness.

Lord Roskelyn's motives were diffeent; he had spared no pains or expence many years before, and had even sent messengers over the neighbouring kingdom, to make inquiry after his son; but all without effect; and, though he could not flatter himself with being more successful, yet he resolved to make the trial, were it only to divert his mind from the loss he had recently sustained.

During

During their absence, lady Matilda was to be placed with the dowager; and all being prepared, with a splendour befitting the countess' wishes, six months after their son's death, they took the way to England.

In the mean time, Monteith was informed by sir Alexander M'Gregor of all that had passed: he did not rejoice at the death of his enemy's child, but he plainly forsaw that, whenever he chose to bring Randolph forward, he would be received as the immediate gift of Heaven.

Three years passed, which completed the manly person of Randolph; tall and well-formed, his body was strong and active, and his features such as at once commanded esteem and respect; while his temper, not to disgrace so fair an exterior, was brave, noble, generous, and humane. The friends of his youth were still beloved with the same ardour; but

his

his partiality for Phillippa was yet more evident, and such as could not have failed to have given pain to Monteith and his wife, had they not foreseen from it the most flattering consequences.

The graces of Phillippa also began to be known far beyond the narrow bounds of Barra, while she herself, like the unconscious rose-bud, bloomed only among the kindred of her parent tree, nor wished to diffuse her charms beyond it.

In the youthful James and St. Clair, Monteith could not fail to retrace his own boyish days; the same person, the same character, distinguished them; so that he would sometimes say to his wife, "By Heavens! Ambrosine, were I inclined to say thou playedst me false, these boys would give me the lie to the whole world, which would sooner believe them not to be thine than mine; for thy alabaster skin, thy soft blue eyes,

and thy amber locks, thou hast bestowed on Phillippa alone."

"In that case then fortune hath been doubly kind," she replied; "for they not only save my reputation, but are what I warmly wished. Randolph also favours thee strongly; both thou and he are true Monteiths, as his mother used to observe of him: but that is easily accounted for; ye both resemble the dowager, except that dame Nature, considering her sex, hath bestowed on her a fairer complexion."

The rude wind and a threatening sky, one evening, having forced a small vessel to seek shelter in the haven of Vatersa, the crew and passengers came on shore, when one of the latter asked several questions respecting Monteith and his family, of whom, he said, he had heard much, and that he should have thanked

thanked rather than have lamented the storm, had it brought him to the knowledge of one he was so anxious to see."

"Marry, master," replied one of the islanders, "and he would have made you right welcome; for he hath a princely spirit; so, in faith, have they all; for, as we say in the islands, 'Go to Barra sad, ye will come back glad.' Not a nobler heart ever beat in a human bosom; and then for his wife and children, in faith, they are the flowers of the country; nay, I'll be bold to say, all Scotland cannot match the lads; then for the lady Phillippa, kings might stake their crowns for her goodwill."

"My good fellow, thou inflamest my curiosity; is there no way to reach the island; the distance is short?"

"Not more than two miles to the tower of M'Leod; and if so be that

you are willing, I have a stout sea-boat, that shall safely carry you."

"I thank you, and will accept your offer." So saying, he gave a piece of gold to the islander, who prepared his boat, which the stranger entering with two of his followers, they soon reached Barra.

"Now my friend, I must farther trouble you to greet the chief from me; say that a stranger from the Orkneys, the lord of Ronaldsa, prays his hospitality this rough night."

"Marry will I; but, were you not a lord, he might perhaps like you better; for he hath had some scurvy tricks played him by some of your brethren; yet, as you are an islander, that may make a difference."

"I trust it will; bear ye the message—I will here wait your return."

The islander immediately hastened to the

the fortress, where he had no sooner delivered his errand, than St. Clair sent Randolph and James to bid the stranger welcome.

Of the outlaws of Barra the lord of Ronaldsa had heard much; but his expectation fell far short of the reality; for he found men whose understanding would have bettered the councils of their country, whose manners might have graced its courts, and whose skill and bravery would have led its armies to conquest.

His own disposition was noble and courteous; he therefore soon conciliated the friendship of his hosts, and the evening passed gaily. At supper, they were joined by the lady Ambrosine and Phillippa, the former of whom repeated his welcome with a grace he had seldom witnessed.

The repast ended, the wife of Monteith, at her husband's request, took her

harp, as Phillippa did her lute, which accompanying with their voices, the lord of Ronaldsa exclaimed, in a rapture—"By Heaven, I would give half my lands to be an outlaw among ye! when James the First sent ye hither, he doomed ye to paradise, not to punishment."

"How can it be otherwise," replied De Bourg, bowing to Ambrosine and her daughter, "when we dwell with angels?"

"True," said Monteith, laughing; "but he sent no angels with us; they were the gift of Heaven."

"Would to fortune then," answered the chevalier, "that Heaven had been more bountiful in the number!"

Ambrosine again tuned her harp and sung, as did also Phillippa, with Randolph and her brother James, till near the hour of midnight, when Ambrosine, rising, said—"The night is far spent, and

and our noble guest, from the fatigues of the day, must be weary."

"Lady," replied he, when I came hither this evening, I thought I was so; but ye possess the power of turning pain to pleasure, for I never felt less fatigue in my life than at the present moment."

Ambrosine bowed, and, with her daughter retired, while Monteith attended his guest to his chamber, and wished him good repose.

CHAPTER IX.



For some days the weather proved stormy—a circumstance the lord of Ronaldsa was not sorry to profit by, to prolong his stay at Barra; young, rich, and uncontrolled master of himself, he felt a strong predilection for the inhabitants of the fortress, and most particularly for Phillippa; so that he seized an opportunity to entreat the interest and consent of the chief and Ambrosine to his addressing their daughter.

"My lord," answered Monteith, "you do me honour, and I feel the obligation as I ought; for you generously wave the distance between your rank and the daughter of a banished man.

man. Of the lord of Ronaldsa, though not before personally known, I have heard much; and my consent cannot fail to sanction your wishes, should you succeed in gaining that of my daughter. Young and unaccustomed to any company but that of her own family and my friends, who to her are as so many fathers, I rather fear she will for the present decline all change: I will, however, frankly lay your merits before her, and give her my opinion; but the decisive reply must come from herself; for in the state of marriage, which of all others I have found most happy, I conceive the parties as the first and most proper agents."

Ambrosine coincided with her husband, and received the thanks of the lord of Ronaldsa, who felt they had said all that a man of probity could expect from the parents of a beloved child.

To break the business to Phillippa

was the task of the lady Ambrosine, who, being alone with her daughter the ensuing morning, said carelessly—"The weather still detains our noble guest; what thinkest thou of him, Phillippa?"

"He is a handsome and portly man," replied she: "think you not so mother?"

"I do," answered Ambrosine.

"Bridget tells me," resumed Phillippa, "that he has been lavish in his generosity to the men and maidens of the fortress, and that his followers speak of him as an honour to his rank."

"Though I like not my guests to pay for their entertainment," replied Ambrosine, "yet his conduct betokens an open heart; and when a noble's vassals speak well of him, 'tis a good sign."

"They also say," continued Phillippa, "that he is greatly beloved in the Orkneys, for his liberality and kindness; all

of

of which accounts have tended to make me respect him."

"They have the same effect upon me," replied Ambrosine.

"Then," said Phillippa, "he presumes not on his rank; he apparently honours my father, and looks upon you with an admiration which makes me love him."

"I rejoice to find you in this opinion," replied Ambrosine; "for he thinks equally well of you."

"Dear mother, I am glad to hear it; did he say so to you?"

"Yes, and to your father. So well he thinks of you, Phillippa, that he yesterday made to your father an offer of taking you for his bride."

"His bride?" repeated Phillippa with astonishment, and a quick but hesitating voice; "his bride! In truth, I would the winds had borne him anywhere but to Barra, if, in requital for my father's

hospitality, he wishes to take away his daughter."

"You speak without reflection; his offer, whether you accept or decline it, does you honour."

"Dear mother, I decline it then, if you please; I shall never again see him with patience."

"That as you list, so that you see and treat him as your father's guest."

"Nay, now," said Phillippa, "you speak as if you were displeased; I pray ye, pardon me; I would love him if I could, but——"

"But what, Phillippa? didst thou not say he was handsome and portly?"

"Ye—ye—yes," hesitating, "but that was only on a cursory view: I think he is much too fair for a man, and his blue eyes, though large, are heavy; and—he is not near so tall as Randolph."

"I did not indeed observe him so accurately;

accurately; but, supposing those defects to exist, if they are defects, they neither lessen the generosity thou talkest of, nor the honour that thou saidst graced his rank."

"No; but if he had an end to gain, the one may easily be explained; and of his honour, we have only the testimony of his followers."

"They seldom exaggerate the virtues of their masters," answered Ambrosine; "didst thou not also say, that thou respected him for his kindness to his dependants in the Orkneys?"

"That we are not assured of, dear mother."

"If you were, you could then love him," said Ambrosine, "especially as he appears to honour thy father, and to admire me."

"Dear lady, I fear not; I can never love any man sufficiently to leave you."

"That objection might be removed, by

by our occasionally residing with each other; what say you to that?"

"Nothing—only that I love him not, nor ever can."

"That answer is decisive; well, since neither the person nor deserts of the lord of Ronaldsa meet thy liking, wilt thou tell me thy criterion of merit and beauty, that I may hereafter judge, when I meet a man that may suit thee?"

"Dear mother, you mock me; I can admire no man that doth not resemble my father or Randolph."

"The model is then fixed I find," replied Ambrosine.

"I dread my father will be displeased with me, in which case I shall hate the lord of Ronaldsa; but if you, dear lady, would speak a little in my favour, he would at once excuse me."

Monteith at that moment entered the chamber.—"If I do not intrude upon you," said he, "I come to inquire whether

whether you have consulted Phillippa on the business of yesterday?"

Phillippa turned away her blushing face in silent confusion.

"I have," answered Ambrosine; "and, before she knew the lord of Ronaldsa's offers, she decked him with every grace and virtue;—those once known, she stripped him again so completely, that not a vestige of either remained; in short, he suits not her fancy; she loves not fair men; she will no husband that doth not resemble thee or Randolph."

"Dear mother," said Phillippa, without raising her eyes, "you are not very angry, or you would not jest; you did not choose a fair man, and why should not my liking accord with yours?"

"I grieve, Phillippa, thou dost not see this young lord with the eyes I wish," answered Monteith, "for I truly believe him, from all report, as virtuous as noble; and we should take time to be assured

assured he was truly so, before we entrusted the happiness of our child to his keeping. Take time to reconsider this business; there is no haste; I should joy to bestow thee on a brave and noble husband."

"Not on him, dear father!" exclaimed she, turning round, and grasping his garment; "I wish to live and die with you."

"My love," replied Monteith, "marriage is a duty which we owe to our families and to society; and the securest asylum for a young and virtuous woman is the arms of a beloved and affectionate husband; should Heaven please to remove thy mother and me, thou wilt need that protection."

"The saints forbid I should live to see that day!" replied she; but should it be so dear father, have I not brothers? Ah, Randolph would sooner perish than let any one offend me!"

"The

"The die is cast," said Monteith in a low voice to his wife; "Heaven bring it to a happy issue!" then turning to his daughter, he added—"We love thee too well, Phillippa, to do more than advise in this business; I shall truly return to the lord of Ronaldsa, thy answer; but, if thou wouldst oblige me, behave to him as usual; for, though thou canst not see him as a lover, remember he is my friend."

Phillippa promised obedience; and, kissing her parents, begged leave to retire—a request that was immediately granted.

"The die is indeed cast, as thou observest," said Ambrosine to Monteith; "never, as I should judge, will that dear child love any other than Randolph; innocent and unsuspecting of guile, her heart readily declares its dictates, which, if it be for her own and

his

his happiness, I should rejoice to see accomplished."

"I fear not to entrust her to the honour of Randolph," answered St. Clair, "but remember, my love, his father, his mother, and the dowager; are they characters upon whom we could depend for the happiness of a child, even if they were willing to grant their coincidence to the union? Never, Ambrosine, shall any man, or his family, receive *thy* daughter, but as I received thee—as the first and choicest gift of Heaven."

"All may yet terminate more fortunately than we can foresee," replied Ambrosine, placing her arm under his, and accompanying him to the hall, where the lord of Ronaldsa awaited them.

CHAP-

CHAPTER. X.

On leaving her parents, Phillippa hastened through the gallery of the fortress to her chamber, but, in the midway, was met by Randolph. In the confusion of the moment, she would have passed; but, accosting her, he said—"My dear sister, you are in tears; tell me, I conjure you, the cause; are you ill, or has aught happened to our parents or friends?"

"No; I am not quite well—somewhat hath vexed me; I shall be better speedily; I will retire to my chamber, and collect my spirits."

"Tell me first what has agitated thee thus? nay, I will know," added he, detaining

taining her; "thy eyes are swollen with weeping."

"Nothing; a trifle not worth thy knowing."

"Then why so cautiously conceal it? I am curious; entrust me, I pray thee, with this trifle."

Phillippa blushed.—"The lord of Ronaldsa——" said she, hesitating.

"Speak, what of him?" said Randolph impatiently.

"He hath—nay, I shame to tell thee——"

"Shame to tell me!" replied Randolph; "shame to tell me!" repeated he; "for Heaven's sake, speak; thou distractest me!"

"The lord of Ronaldsa hath vexed me to death."

"Then will I vex him to death," answered Randolph, loosing her garment, which he before held, and grasping his sword; "sorrow light on him! is this

this a requital for my father's hospitality?"

As he concluded, he attempted to quit her; but snatching his tartan, she said—"Thou art too hasty, and misconceived me; lord Ronaldsa hath done nothing worthy thy anger."

"Nothing worthy my anger!" repeated he; "why, didst thou not say he had vexed thee to death, that thou wast ashamed to tell me, and did I not see thy tears? Thou triflest with me, Phillippa."

"No, on my life; but it is so awkward to tell thee that—that he hath—"

"What hath he done or said?" interrupted Randolph impatiently.

"He hath had," replied she blushing, "the impertinence to——"

Randolph snatched his tartan from her grasp, and was again hastily leaving the gallery, when, running after him, she

she added—"To ask my father's consent to make me his bride."

"To make thee his bride! his bride, didst thou say?" his hand falling from his sword, and, stopping short, he struck it on his forehead, as if recalled to sudden recollection:—"his bride! I think, thou saidst?—nothing more?"

"Nothing more!" repeated she; "was not that enough, that he should want to take me from—my parents?"

Randolph paused.—"Dear sister," at length said he, "what did they say to the offer?"

"They wished me to love him, but I could not; and so, with their usual tenderness, they excused me."

"They are indeed kind: but the lord of Ronaldsa is both a handsome and a gallant man."

"I care not what he is, so he leaves us speedily; dost thou too wish me to wed

wed this strange man? Fie upon thee Randolph! I thought thou lovedst me better."

"I love thee a thousand times more than myself," dear Phillippa; "but, though I never before reflected on the subject, thou must some time marry; and I should therefore wish to see thee the wife of a noble and good man, which the lord of Ronaldsa is said to be."

Phillippa's tears again flowed—"What necessity is there," said she, "that I should wed at all? can I not live with my parents and brothers all my life? But *thou,* selfish Randolph, art afraid I shall be troublesome to thee: *thou* also, I suppose, must *some time* marry: then thou wilt think no more of thy sister."

"When I cease to think of thee, I shall cease to think at all. Dry thy tears; our parents will never wish thee

to

to wed against thy liking: as to the lord of Ronaldsa, he will leave us as soon as the weather permits."

"I will pray for a favourable wind," answered she, "not that I bear him any anger, but rather goodwill, provided he would be kind enough not to love me."

Randolph made no reply.—"You do not speak," continued she; "nay, then, I see you are displeased with me; it was enough to have crossed my parents, without having your anger added to it."

"Sweet Phillippa," answered he, clasping his arms about her, "I never felt displeased with thee in my life."

"Well then," replied she, kissing his cheek, "we are friends, and I am happy. I will retire to my chamber; only remember, Randolph, should my father consult thee, take thy sister's part; for I would sooner die than wed this lord of Ronaldsa."

Randolph

Randolph promised observance, and she left him. For a considerable time after, he walked up and down the gallery, with his arms folded and in deep reflection, until at length, seeing at a distance Monteith and the lord of Ronaldsa on the shore, he descended and joined them.

Monteith had declined the young lord's alliance in his daughter's name, but in such gentle and palliating terms, that though he felt grieved at the disappointment, no displeasure could be mixed with it.

As Randolph approached them, Ronaldsa said to Monteith—"Noble chief, although I cannot aspire to the happiness of being of your kindred, I claim an interest in your son; I am not many years his elder, and I will love him for his sister's sake."

Randolph was confused.—"Generous lord," replied he, "I will love you for

your own; my sister Phillippa is too young as yet to estimate your worth."

Monteith was pleased to see them friends, and, saying all that he supposed might contribute towards a mutual esteem, they walked to the fortress.

At dinner, an appearance of restraint was visible in Ronaldsa, Phillippa, and Randolph, though each esteemed the other; it however insensibly wore off; and, towards evening, the wind proving fair, the first-named proposed to leave the island the ensuing day: Monteith insisted to the contrary; and all conspiring to banish the recent disappointment from the mind of the guest, the evening passed agreeably.

On withdrawing to their chambers, Randolph threw himself on the bed, but, instead of composing himself to rest, passed the night in a frame of mind he had never before experienced; a thousand tormenting ideas arose on his

fancy,

fancy, and banished sleep, until the morning bell called together the residents of the fortress, and warned him to rise, when, with pale cheeks and a fevered brain, he descended to the hall.

On his entrance, his altered countenance caught the eye of Phillippa.—"Dear brother," said she, "what ails thee? thy face is pale, and thy eyes sunken; thou art not well; I pray ye, look at him, dear mother."

Randolph forced a smile.—"Phillippa," replied he, "I had evil dreams last night, and they have made me pale."

"Ridiculous! thou mockest me."

"Nay," replied he, "say not so; didst not thou answer me thus some mornings back, when I thought thee ill?"

"Yes; but thou carest not for dreams, and I am sure thou art sick."

"Not unless you can persuade me to be so; for I feel no inconvenience; so I pray

pray you dear sister, to let it rest till I complain."

All observed the changed looks of Randolph, but, as he denied it, remained silent; though Monteith and his wife, who both watched him narrowly, observed he did not partake the repast, yet he evidently endeavoured, by a forced cheerfulness, to make it pass unnoticed.

The breakfast concluded, drawing Monteith aside, he said—" Dear father, may I crave a private conversation with you for a short time? I have a proposal to make, which, I trust, will meet your approbation."

Monteith assented; and, leaving the party, he quitted the hall, followed by Randolph.

On entering a chamber, Monteith waited for Randolph to begin; but, for a time, he appeared irresolute; at length, though evidently struggling for composure,

sure, he said—"Forgive me, dearest, best of parents! but I wish to leave the fortress."

"To leave the fortress!" replied Monteith with astonishment; "from what cause, I pray you, and that too so suddenly?"

"I am of an age to shew myself worthy the father who gave me life, and who has rendered that life estimable by his kindness. The lord of Ronaldsa says, that a projected marriage between the young king of Scots and Mary the niece of Charles the Bold, hath rendered the English suspicious and ripe for fresh commotions, should it take place; in which case, Monteith's son hath to earn a right to the noble name he bears."

"My brave lad thou meetest my wishes; but all is yet quiet; should it prove otherwise, thou shalt win honour and wear it. I daily expect sir Alexan-

 der

der M'Gregor; in case of war, thou shalt commence thy career under his banner."

"The lord of Ronaldsa will leave us in a day or two; could I not, dear father, go with him?"

"Thou astonishest me; what have we done, that thou art in such haste to leave us? till this hour I thought we were all dear to thee; but I was mistaken."

"Dear!" repeated Randolph; "Heaven knows how dear! more precious to my heart than life or liberty!"

"Then why leave us till necessity calls?"

"For the love of Heaven, press not my stay; I am unworthy your affection: I hate myself."

Somewhat of the true cause struck across the mind of Monteith.—"Nay, then," replied he, "thou *shalt* away with sir Alexander, whom I expect the first fair wind; but, till then, be patient.

For

For thy reasons, I ask no more; I would be a father not an inquisitor."

Randolph threw himself at Monteith's feet, and pressed his hands to his lips.—"Randolph," continued the chief, "the road to honour is sometimes painful, but, the end achieved, the reward is certain; thou art young, and any error or folly contracted in thy boyish days will be obliterated in the active life thou wilt embrace."

Randolph trembled, lest a secret which only his own heart whispered, and of which the most transient idea made him shudder, had transpired, and become known to the chief; but, finding his demeanour calm, he replied—"I trust it will; Randolph will act worthy his blood, or cease to live."

Monteith embraced him.—"Well," said he, "now let the matter rest; I expect thy obedience in waiting for sir Alexander; but, should there be no

 opportunity

opportunity for thee to distinguish thyself, when may we expect thee back to Barra?"

"When I deserve that happiness, and can return with honour," replied Randolph.

"Thy absence will not then be long," said St. Clair; "and should at any time these womanish weaknesses oppress thee, remember my words (and I am not given to flatter), *we shall meet in a more propitious hour, when, if thou art not happy, it will be thine own fault.*"

As Monteith concluded, he left the apartment before Randolph could reply.

"Best of men," exclaimed he, "how dost thou try to palliate and sooth an emotion, which, though thou seest, thou canst not conjecture the cause! No, thy heart is too pure to guess at such depravity; till yesterday, myself could not have suspected it. Would that sir Alexander were come, and the cruel

but

but necessary separation over!—then, Phillippa, sister, most beloved, never shall my eyes behold the happy scene of my boyish days till thou art wedded. Lie still, thou throbbing heart; know honour for thy master; for I *will* conquer thee or perish."

For some time he remained alone, struggling to compose his agitations, and at length succeeded sufficiently to return to the hall.

Monteith saw with satisfaction that his spirits were more calm; for he entered into conversation with the lord of Ronaldsa, and asked his destination when he reached Scotland?

"Though no courtier," replied Ronaldsa, "I shall first visit Stirling, where, I believe the young king now is. My arm and fortune are devoted to his cause; for the oppression of his nobles during his minority has filled me with detestation and contempt. The chancellor

cellor and the governor are both declared traitors, and from the king they can expect no favour."

Randolph informed him, that he had obtained his father's consent to list under the banner of sir Alexander M'Gregor; in which case, he hoped they should meet again.

Ronaldsa seconded the wish; and the elders entering into details of the contests in which they had been engaged, the young men, warmed at the recital, for a time forgot, the one his recent disappointment, and the other his recent anxiety.

Though the weather proved clear, and the wind favourable, Monteith prevailed with the lord of Ronaldsa to remain a few days longer, during which period sir Alexander M'Gregor arrived.

He was received with joy by the whole party, and, somewhat recovered from his fatigue, entered into a full

account

account of the contentions which reigned through Scotland.

Livingstone, he informed them had fallen upon the scaffold; the queen-mother was dead; and James, now eighteen, had taken into his own hands the supreme power, and consented to espouse, on the recommendation of Charles king of France, the daughter of the duke of Guelders—a step which would not fail to awaken the jealousy and ancient animosity of the English.

"I rejoice to hear it," answered Randolph; "our swords will not then rust in their scabbards. Lord Ronaldsa and myself will start for fame together: and much rather would I be engaged with foreign foes than in those civil commotions that so often distract the country."

"To your care, sir Alexander," said Monteith, "I resign Randolph; he hath completed his twentieth year, and,

eager for glory, I know not where he can sooner achieve it than under your banner."

"Right welcome shall he be," answered M'Gregor; "heretofore beloved for your sake, Monteith, and my brother's; hereafter for his own."

As the veteran spoke, he held out his hand to Randolph, who, from Phillippa's words, had long persuaded himself he was allied to the M'Gregors, and raising the chief's hand to his lips, replied—"I trust I shall neither disgrace the name of Monteith, nor that of M'Gregor."

"I will answer thou wilt not," replied sir Alexander, "nor any other name, however great."

"Noble chief," said Ronaldsa, addressing St. Clair, "I am a soldier of fortune; I have no father, nor warlike relative, to direct my steps; your kindness

ness hath taught me to be intrusive; I would your noble friend would admit me of his party."

"Sir Alexander," said Monteith, "I present another petitioner, the lord of Ronaldsa; I wished to call him son, but it cannot be; he is, however, high in my esteem, and his friendship does me honour."

"Then will his friendship do me honour also," replied sir Alexander, taking the young lord's hand; "Monteith, we shall now only wish for thee and thy brave comrades; but, as thou hast borne it nobly, shrink not now; the hour of triumph and liberty is at hand."

"My mind whispers that it is," answered St. Clair; "our hearts will however be with you."

"Father," said the youthful James Monteith, "I have had proof that you can forgive a runaway; I feel inclined

to

to put your goodness to the test a second time."

"My dear lad," replied Monteith, "though I like thy ardour, in this case, I charge thee, obey me; thou art yet too young for the field, and, in an encounter with men, mightst be disgraced by a defeat, when neither courage, nor skill might be wanting, but only the strength of maturer years."

"Truly observed," said sir Alexander; "a short time, James may give thee thy father for a leader; till then be patient."

The discourse now became universal, and many of the residents of the fortress, who were not detained by law, resolved to take an active part in the expected war, and for which there were already great preparations made throughout Scotland.

After supper, sir Alexander informed them,

them, that lord Roskelyn was returned from England; that his lady and himself were at continual variance; and that, in consequence, he had refused to let the lady Matilda be removed from the dowager, who was said to devote herself to privacy and works of charity.

"Nay, then," said De Bourg, "let the Devil mourn, lest he be cheated of his due; but fifty chapels and an hundred convents cannot obliterate her guilt. She is, however, a proof that, though sin may be passing sweet to the taste, 'tis as hard of digestion as lead."

"What think the world of the lady Matilda?" said Ambrosine to sir Alexander.

"Judging from her youth," replied he, "they auger well at present; they bespeak her beautiful, gentle, and humane."

"Marry," said De Bourg, "I wonder

der from whom she inherited the last qualities."

"From Heaven," replied Ambrosine; "all evil men have not bad children, nor all virtuous parents good ones; a wiser head than ours directs the whole; adversity is a useful lesson; and the proud house of Roskelyn is, I hope, humbled for wise purposes. May the errors of the present possessors be buried with them, and the remembrance be effaced by the virtues of those who succeed!—But come, Phillippa, we will retire, and leave our friends to converse on their future prospects." So saying, she rose, and, bidding all a good night, left them.

CHAPTER XI.



As Phillippa sat alone with Ambrosine, she said—"Dear mother, think you not it would have been better for my brother Randolph to have remained at home some time longer, as then he might have had James for his companion in arms?"

"Your father judges that James has not yet arrived at the strength necessary for defence; think you that plea would serve for Randolph?"

"I believe not," replied Phillippa; "but should we be so blest as to see my father at liberty, as sir Alexander seemed to conjecture, Randolph would then have

have had him for a leader; in the mean time, he could have——"

"Remained at home," interrupted Ambrosine, "and thou couldst have taught him to sew; and, had he been ingenious, he might in time have improved sufficiently to make tartans and vests for the whole fortress, and thus have saved the expence of a tailor:—thinkest thou not he would have been most notably employed?"

"Dear mother, I meant no offence; you love Randolph as well as I, though you speak thus."

"I love him too well, Phillippa, to wish him to idle his time in vain and inglorious fancies, and speak of him as I hereafter would of James and St. Clair; for sooner would I be said to be the proud mother of one dead hero, than the blushing mother of ten cowards."

"Randolph will never be a coward; his

his search for his father hath already proved his character; would I were a boy, then should I go with him."

"Thou wilt see him with double pleasure, should he return decked with honours bravely earned."

"Heaven forefend that he should be slain! my heart sickens at the bare surmise—never more should I be happy; yet hath he vexed me more within these few last days, than he hath ever before done in his whole life."

"How, I pray you?" demanded Ambrosine.

"I know he is displeased that I have refused the lord of Ronaldsa, and that makes him shun me. In truth, had a princess been offered to him, and he had not loved her, I would have been the first to take his part, and to deprecate the anger of others against him."

"I do not doubt it," said Ambrosine; "but it is the duty of brothers to

wish

wish their sisters suitably wedded; and no objection could be found against Ronaldsa, couldst thou have loved him."

"You loved my father above all men, and so must I the man I wed, or never wed at all.—I shall never forget your goodness, in suffering me to refuse him; I hope I shall never offend you while I live."

"I am sure thou wilt not premeditately; but retire to rest, my love; I hear the guests rising in the hall: Heaven bless and guard thee!"

"The Virgin bless and guard your slumbers, dearest, best of parents," returned Phillippa, kissing her, "and make me worthy such a mother!"



Some few days after, the wind proving favourable, the whole party prepared to depart. Ambrosine bade Randolph farewell with her usual fortitude; though, as

as she embraced him, he felt a tear on his cheek.—"Go, my dear youth," said she, "I trust, to honour and happiness. Long, long it may be ere we meet again; but remember thou hast in me a mother, who hath loved thee from thy infancy, and who will ever act worthy that sacred title."

Randolph kissed her hand, and bent his knee before her.—"When I forget your goodness, may Heaven forsake me!" said he. "My sweet sister Phillippa is too much affected. Oh, lady, the love you bear me, transfer for a while wholly to her, and teach her, by your example, to bear an absence, however necessary, painful to me as death."

Phillippa covered her face with her hands; but no word or sound of sorrow escaped her.

"Sister," resumed Randolph, approaching her, "I pray thee speak to me; let

let me bear thy good wishes with me, or I shall not prosper."

Phillippa threw herself into his arms —" Dearest, best of brothers," said she, " would at this moment I possessed the power to add the amount of my days and happiness to the account of thine! but, as that may not be, shouldst thou be devoted to the battle's rage, remember Barra and thy sister."

Phillippa would have proceeded, but her heart was too full for utterance, and she fainted on the bosom of her mother.

Monteith instantly took her in his arms, and bore her to her chamber, followed by Ambrosine; but speedily returning, and observing the strong emotion on the features of Randolph, he said gaily—" Thank Heaven, the women are gone! for a man fights but coldly whose sword is muffled in a petticoat. —Randolph, farewell! we part as men; when

when we meet again, I trust to see a hero."

Randolph returned his embrace; and after clasping James and St. Clair to his bosom, he, in silence, followed sir Alexander and the party from the fortress.

They immediately embarked; and the wind proving favourable, they reached the main land in safety.

In the mean time, the change that had taken place among the residents of the fortress affected all. Ambrosine, in spite of her utmost efforts, had not her usual spirits; and Phillippa, though it was evident she struggled to imitate her mother, was pale and thoughtful. For the outlaws, though secure from the tumults of their country in the island of Barra, their ardour was awakened by the accounts they had received of hostile

preparations, and made them resolve that, whatever might be the consequence, should their country sound to arms, they would break their bonds, and, by bravery, earn liberty or death.

Though the wind continued fair for some time after the departure of sir Alexander and his companions, yet, in about ten days, the sky became overcast, and the waves vying in height with the mountains, presented a spectacle of affright and horror, from the pieces of wrecked vessels, barrels, and drowned bodies, which were thrown on the shore.

Commanding the rites of sepulture to be paid to the dead, Monteith and his companions ordered large fires to be made on the heights of the island; and, regardless of the storm, paraded the coast, to discover if any thing presented

wherein

wherein they could be of service. On the second day, they descried at a distance, a small vessel, which the waves one moment appeared to throw up to the sky, and the next to precipitate into the unfathomable abyss.

It evidently strove to reach the coast; but all efforts were for some hours unavailing, nor could the islanders afford them other assistance than, by their fires and flags, pointing out the most secure parts to land. All direction was however vain; the vessel was the sport of the waves, and at length struck on a rock at some distance from the island.

Though wrecked upon the most dangerous part of the coast, the humanity of the inhabitants mastered all selfish fear, and Monteith, with his companions, launching a strong sea-boat, leaped on board, and, as well as the waves would permit, steered towards them.

With infinite labour and danger they at length reached the vessel, and fortunately saved the crew, consisting of five persons, so reduced with fatigue and cold, that all farther exertion to save their lives appeared impossible.

Before they again reached land, the wrecked vessel, which was a small Danish trader, went to pieces. Having moored their boat, they conducted the strangers, who appeared common mariners, to the fortress, where they ordered them refreshment and to be conducted to rest.

Towards evening the storm began to abate; and the friends supped joyously, from the reflection that they had saved five men, who, without their efforts, must ere that have been numbered with the dead.

The lady Ambrosine was also apparently cheerful; but she sighed often, from the recollection that she might, but for

for the especial protection of Heaven, have been at that moment a sorrowing widow.

The conflict her mind had sustained, when informed that Monteith and his friends had adventured out to sea, was not lost on Phillippa, who considered her behaviour with wonder and admiration; for no word or complaint escaped her, though her pale cheeks and strained eyes, bent towards the coast, shewed where all her thoughts were centered.

As Phillippa looked on her thus fixed, she said, with tearful eyes—"Dear mother, give sorrow words, or it will break your heart; look not towards the sea—it increases your uneasiness. The wind blows not so tempestuously: the waves, I think, are not so rough: my father will, I trust, return in safety."

"I trust he will; but, should he not, the deed will waft his soul to happiness. The debt of nature must be paid, Phil-

lippa; and whether now, or a few years hence, Heaven best knows."

Watching from the fortress, they at length saw the boat reach the coast. Ambrosine, in silent joy and thankfulness, descended to the hall, while Phillippa, regardless of the bleak winds that whistled round her, or the falling rain, rushed out to meet her father, crying—"Welcome, welcome! hasten forward, that my mother may be convinced you are safe; she hath been the image of death during your absence."

Monteith did not need twice pressing, but was agreeably surprised to meet Ambrosine at the entrance of the fortress. A soft smile played upon her features, and throwing her arms around him, she said cheerfully—"Truant that thou art, thou hast alarmed me; but the past sorrow is lost in the present joy; I trust ye have adventured to some advantage."

Monteith informed her of their success,

cess and led her to the hall, where his companions joined them. The ensuing morning, one of the strangers being unable to rise, St. Clair, with hospitable charity, visited him in his chamber, and bade him want for nothing the fortress afforded. De Bourg accompanied the chief in this visit, while Ambrosine and the rest of the inmates conversed with those that were more recovered in the hall.

The conciliatory manner of the chief and De Bourg emboldened their humble guest to talk with some freedom; a thousand times he thanked them for his preservation, and for their succeeding kindness and humanity.—"Noble masters," continued he, "I am no traveller; this was my first voyage; and, i'faith, no wealth shall ever tempt me to make another. I took grain to Denmark, and was bringing back iron, when this fearful storm beset us. By what I judge,

I am

I am now in one of the Western Isles, but know not which."

"Thou art in the tower of M'Leod, in the isle of Barra," said Monteith.

The man started.—"I pray ye, good sirs, pardon me; did ye not say the tower of M'Leod?"

"I did; but why ask you?"

"Pardon me, sirs, and I will tell ye; but say, is this tower inhabited?"

"Seest thou not it is?" replied De Bourg.

"Yes, truly; but many years ago, I heard a prophecy respecting the tower of M'Leod, though I then knew not where it was situated, and this brings it to my memory."

"Did the prophecy say thou wert to be saved there?" said De Bourg, incredulously.

"No, my gracious master; I understand it not; but it surely alluded to higher blood than mine. It was the prediction

diction of a seer of Roskelyn Glen, a native of the isles; my father was a vassal of that house, and we thought it not prudent to reveal it."

The curiosity of both Monteith and De Bourg was raised.—"What, I pray you, did he say?" inquired Monteith.

"I cannot remember the exact words, for many years are since passed; but myself and one of my comrades, who heard the prophecy, declared it truly at the time to the priest at Inveresk; he wrote it carefully down, and no doubt it is now in the church books; but he bade us say nothing, as God's will would be fulfilled in his own time; and that revealing it might occasion evil."

"What was the purport of it?" interrupted De Bourg impatiently.

"The seer said," resumed the man, "that the tower of M'Leod was desolate, and only the habitation of birds; but that it soon would become the dwelling

ing of an *eagle*, who, under his wings, should rear a *bloody arm*, on which should hang the future fate of Scotland."

Monteith and De Bourg looked at each other with astonishment.—"Proceed," said the first, "what more?"

"He said," resumed the man, "what I have never before dared to name, that the proud house of Roskelyn should bow, till its *greatest disgrace* became its *highest glory*. He next spoke of a dreadful and bloody battle, and was so fearfully agitated, that, by my faith, my hair raised the cap on my head."

"Is the account true?" said Monteith.

"Most true," replied the man, "or may Heaven forsake me! What the first part of the prophecy meant, I cannot judge; for I see no desolation here: yet the second part is surely fulfilling; for the lord of Roskelyn hath no son to inherit his honours; but for a vassal to remark

remark that, would prove his destruction from the proud countess."

"What is your name?" said Monteith.

"My name is Donald M'Kenzie; I was then a young man; it may be some twenty-two years since, for I remember it was just before the lord of Roskelyn wedded the daughter of sir David Stuart.

"This matter is strange enough," said De Bourg carelessly; "and thy companion that also heard this prediction, is he living?"

"He is; even yet he dwells on the estate of Roskelyn; we have often, when alone, talked about it, but that so carefully, as if we feared the echo of our voices should repeat our words. You, noble sirs, that have ventured your lives for poor men, will not, I am sure, injure any one. Indeed, I can truly declare, that ye so surprised me by saying that I

was

was in the tower of M'Leod, that I involuntarily made ye masters of my secret."

"By our honour, we will never injure thee. This prophecy, thou sayest, is in the priest's books at Inveresk; but it is so wrapped up in mystery, that it may never be developed."

"Truly, I should think so," answered Donald, "were it not for the truth respecting the lord of Roskelyn's house."

"Well, haste thee to regain thy strength," said Monteith; "we will contribute something towards repairing thy losses, ere thou departest."

With these words Monteith and De Bourg left him, and joined their companions in the hall, they having dismissed the mariners to the care of the domestics.

De Bourg immediately related the strange conversation that had occurred with Donald.—"By my soul," said he, "I should

"I should believe the whole to be a lie, but that I cannot suppose the fellow would have been shipwrecked on purpose to carry on the joke: again, should he by any means, which however does not appear, know St. Clair, and that the eagle is the ancient device of the house of Monteith, yet it is impossible he should surmise ought of Randolph, who is palpably meant by the bloody arm."

"It is wonderful," said Ambrosine; "and I cannot help thinking that it bears some similitude to the words of the seer of the castle of Monteith, who alluded to a victory to be obtained by a *willing captive*."

"By my faith," said Monteith, "but ye are turning soothsayers. What good spirits assist our Randolph, I care not; I trust he will be quit of evil ones; a clear conscience and a strong sword are all that is necessary for a brave man. However, for the present, let the matter rest; if

if ever we go to the Lowlands, we will satisfy ourselves if the report of the prophecy being inserted in the priest's books be true. What to me gives it the strongest colour is, that I well remember our old steward Andrew had a brother, who dwelt in the glen of Roskelyn; he was a man totally abstracted from the world, devoting himself to acts of piety, and leading a hermit's life, and was also, like Andrew, said to possess the gift of prophecy. All I would entreat is, that this event may remain unknown to the younger part of the family."

The caution of Monteith was approved by all; and Ross, addressing him, said—"You have had your discoveries, and so have we: in the confusion of yesterday, I never recognised, among the men we rescued, one of the Danish crew that entrapped us; but to-day I instantly recollected him; the fellow was a subaltern, and not among our assailants,

ants, which he informs me were entirely composed of M'Lellan's party."

"Could he give you any new information respecting the business?" replied St. Clair.

"Yes: M'Lellan entirely transacted the whole: the countess was too good a politician to appear in it. M'Lellan told the captain of the Dane that we were traitors, whom he was employed by the state to seize, but that we were so powerfully supported in the islands, it was impossible to be achieved unless by fraud, which might easily be effected, as we were continually sailing about the adjoining coast. Whether the captain believed this account, I know not; but his connivance was purchased by a present of nobles and demies, for which he took M'Lellan and his men on board: what passed afterward need no repetition."

Phillippa with her brothers, at that moment joining them, the conversation ceased

ceased. Some days after, the ship-wrecked men left them, in a vessel that put into Vatersa. The inhabitants of the fortress presented each with a small sum, but to Donald a sufficiency to make up his loss.

In the mean time, sir Alexander and his party landed safely and proceeded to Stirling, to offer their services to the young king.—" I loved not his father," said sir Alexander, " but he is gone to his account; and for this youth, the true heir of our kingdom, I will at once devote my arm and fortune. Should he hereafter prove a tyrant, I will forsake him; the fault will be his, not mine; I shall have done my duty to my country, and stand acquitted to God and my own conscience."

As they were to pass near the castle of Monteith, St. Clair prayed them to remain there a short time. The ruin and desolation that reigned around and within the noble mansion struck them

with

with sorrow; but sir Alexander commanding several repairs to be made, it before their departure, bore a more habitable appearance.

One of Randolph's first cares was, to seek out the religious house in the valley, where, to his great satisfaction, he found father Thomas still living, though bent with age, and his few scattered hairs and beard white as wool, or thistle down. Randolph kneeled and received his benediction; but, when informed he was the son of St. Clair, the old man fell upon his neck and wept aloud.—"My son," exclaimed he, "mayst thou possess the bravery and humanity of thy father! but remember to temper courage with prudence, and to spread thy bounty with an open but not a prodigal hand. Oh that my aged eyes could once more behold him! so long a banishment hath, I doubt not, sorely changed him."

"His friends say otherwise, father: his port is noble and erect, and his features

tures bespeak him not more than my elder brother."

"To Heaven be the praise, that hath not suffered his enemies to bereave him of life; I pray thee, bear him my blessing; to my last hour will I remember him in my orisons."

"Dear father," replied Randolph, "the king's minority past, we nourish the most sanguine hopes of his liberation, and that of his companions, not one of whom will accept it singly."

The friar was not soon weary of conversing with Randolph, who, on his part, regarded him with the reverence due to his habit, and as one of his father's most respected friends; and, after passing some hours with him, left him, with a promise to see him daily while he remained at the castle.

END OF VOL. III.

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